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THE  
TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.

BY

GEORGE FRANCIS ARMSTRONG, M.A.,

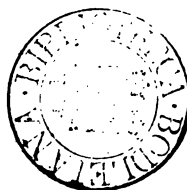
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND ENGLISH LITERATURE IN  
THE QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CORK.

KING SAUL.

<sup>Extra</sup>  
Processit longe flammantia moenia mundi ;  
Atque omne ~~inaccessum~~ peragravit mente animoque.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Illud in his rebus vereor, ne forte rearis  
Impia te rationis inire elementa, viamque  
Indugredi sceleris ; quod contra sæpius illa  
Religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta."

LUCRETIVS.



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LONGMANS, GREEN, READER AND DYER.

1872.

*Malone J. 1148.*

280 2 603.

CHISWICK PRESS :—PRINTED BY WHITTINGHAM AND WILKINS,  
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE.

## PERSONS.

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SAUL.  
SAMUEL.  
ABNER.  
JONATHAN.  
DAVID.  
AGAG.  
DOEG.  
ACHISH.  
JOAB.  
ABISHAI.  
ASAHEL.  
NATHAN.  
GAD.  
ABIATHAR.  
MERAB.  
MICHAL.  
AHINOAM.  
ABIGAIL.

The King's Armour-Bearer.  
An Amalekite Wanderer.  
Israelites.  
Amalekite Captives.  
Philistines.  
Messengers.



THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.

PART I. KING SAUL.







# THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.

## PART I. KING SAUL.

### ACT I.

SCENE I. *Ramah. Within the tent of SAMUEL.*

*SAMUEL asleep.*

A VOICE.

**A** WAKE, awake, awake!

MANY VOICES.

Hath not the tongue of Thy thunder outspoken,  
and hath he not heard,  
Man whom Thou madest, and seen of Thy laws,  
and Thy light, and Thy word,  
In the dawn, and the day, in the waters, the winds,  
and the wings of the bird,

4    *THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.*

Billowing boughs of the forest, and meadows that  
    roll in the sun,  
Speed of the fleet-footed horses that glad in Thy  
    wilderness run,  
And the whirl of the wheels of Thy planets around  
    Thee and under Thee spun ?  
Shall he rid, then, his mouth of Thy bridle, or  
    break from Thy chariot-wheel,  
Who drivest the sons of the earth with a hand that  
    is tender to feel ?  
Whithersoever Thy love for him leadeth, Thy ways  
    are his weal.  
Only to go as Thou guidest him and to give heed  
    to Thy voice,  
This is the strength of his limbs, and a splendour  
    wherein to rejoice.  
Freedom to choose Thou hast lent him, and Reason,  
    a lamp to his choice.  
If he but swerve from Thy wrist, or but deafen his  
    ear to Thy cries,  
Where is the might of his feet or the light of his  
    faltering eyes ?

Who shall uphold him, or help, who Thy love and  
Thy mercy denies ?

Perfect Thou madest Thy world in its system, a  
work without flaw :

Shall we not hold him accurst who would file at the  
links of its law ?

Shall he not perish whose hand from their sockets  
its pillars would draw ?

Saul, Saul, Saul, thou hast trampled the beautiful plan,  
God's delicate deed, with the blunder of beasts,  
with the might of a man,

And the glory of thee and thy people of Israel left  
as a span.

A VOICE.

Awake, awake,  
Prophet of God, from Thy slumber break,  
Forth to the judgment of the people go.

MANY VOICES.

Woe, woe !

In our ear is the sound of the thunder, the hiss of  
the rain,

6    *THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.*

And the heavens are black with the clouds like a host,  
    'mid the cries of a marshalling hurricane.

SAMUEL (*leaping up*).

I saw a king armed as for awful strife  
With one of shining raiment and bright hair,  
And ran, and cried, Stay thy rebellious hand ;  
It is the Son of God, it is thy Lord :  
But he unheeding smote : and there arose  
Clangour of battle, and the sons of men  
With angels grappling in unearthly war  
Thronged thick on either side of those twin forms,  
And the sun, reddening as with blood, outflamed  
A moment, and then fell . . . I led your feet  
Father-like through rough ways, O Israel !  
What was it I had done that ye should ask  
A king ? A king I gave you. Have ye gleaned  
Bliss with your king ? Is God come nigh to you ?  
Have ye stored peace, or wealth, or victories,  
Such as ye craved ? Thrice cursèd of all tribes  
That till the earth or roam the wastes or seas,  
Israel, thou, thrice blessed with dower of God

And knowledge, thou, His chosen, who art blind,  
Ungrateful, disobedient, reprobate,  
Dead brutish worshipper of idols dead,  
Who hast the Omnipotent disdained, thy years  
Shall harvest yield of sorrows numberless,  
Thou shalt with knives be cloven, and thy parts  
Cast out, and trampled under impious feet . . .  
Yea, I have heard Thy voice. Arise and strike,  
If justice hunger ; spare, if yet their heart  
Have any lingering worship, Lord, or love !  
Be I thy sword for sheathing or for blood !  
And thou, thou Saul, whom I from thy low place  
Chose and anointed king, where only He  
Wore crown till they forsook Him, thou hast **failed**  
Utterly, and thy branch is broken off.  
Seeing thou wouldst against High God Himself  
Oppose thy will, and set thy soul in arms,  
His will subdueth thee, and thee in arms  
Defeat shall find, and wounds, and whetted scorn :  
And now the day of thy despair is nigh.

8    *THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.*

SCENE II.    *The Camp at Gilgal.*

SAUL, AGAG, WARRIORS, CAPTIVES.

WARRIORS.

THOU hast led thy hosts to a battle, led to a battle  
and victory,

Led thy servants in thee trusting, Saul, who are  
mighty in following thee.

Fierce the fire within us kindling, King, at the  
sound of thy rallying cries,

Fierce the combat where thou movedst, ever a light  
in our straining eyes.

Like the grass about the mower, like the corn at the  
reapers' feet,

Fell the lancers, fell the bowmen, fell the chief from  
his charger fleet ;

Like the cones that roll and tumble when the winds  
in the cedars leap,

Rolled their targets, ran their helmets, down the  
valley and o'er the steep ;



*PART I. KING SAUL.* 9

Like the gusts of an ebbing tempest, like the splash  
of a buffeted wave,

Failed the fury of stubborn phalanx, fell the enemy  
to his grave.

In our ears their flocks are bleating, by our chains  
are their captives bound.

Bow as unto the throne of a deity, psalm his praise  
with a thunder-sound.

O, commingling with our spirits, there thy spirit  
within us stirred,

And in the clamour of fight and clangour, shield  
with shield and sword with sword,

Clash of chariots, shout of horsemen, neigh and  
trample of charging steeds,

Ever the victory round us streaming was the fire of  
thy valorous deeds.

AGAG.

Will the King hear his servant? will the King  
Vouchsafe a moment's interchange of speech  
With the King's vassal? To the earth he bows,

20 *THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.*

The servant of the King—a worm he seems—  
To kiss thy sovran feet.

SAUL.

Rise, Amalek.

AGAG.

O, very merciful and kind art thou !  
Only the valiant, friends, are merciful.  
My King and my high lord ! Ah, strange it seems—  
A villain trick of the ill god—ah, strange  
The valiant King and the poor worm should strive.  
Is Agag worthy of the great King's ire ?  
Too mean, too mean he seems to Agag's self  
To merit favour of wrath—I say, too mean.  
His Majesty would wage no bitter war  
With a sick dog, or fly that sucks a sore,  
But liever fight the lion, or the pard,  
Or many-fingered champion of the hosts,  
Or tyrant of a generous race betrayed.  
Methinks in his great heart a worm or fly  
Would waken no hot rage ; nay, nay, nay, nay,

*PART I, KING SAUL.*

11

Why plead so with the King? If Agag erred  
Toward the King's God, why, blind were Agag's  
eyes—

For he was born in darkness; and he hath  
Repented. Surely will the King forbear.

SAUL.

I am no judge of creatures, Amalek.  
I made thee not, judge not.

AGAG.

O just, good King!  
Ever the brave are gentle, and the strong  
Pitiful. And the King will crush it not,  
The poor sick worm that crawleth to his foot?  
Surely the god of Israel is God,  
None other.

SAUL.

I am not thy God. Arise.  
I hunger not for any flesh of men.  
I would have love on earth; I cry for rest  
From violent strifes. Thou poor and ignorant king,  
I have not fought against thee for the glut

AGAG.

No, no, no : when hath Agag watched  
On the hill-side till all his heart was cold ?  
I say, for them that thing is wondrous good.  
For Agag it was sweet of old to rule,  
Be king of many people, drink their praise,  
Slay or make live. Now is this gone : and why ?  
A stronger king hath taken Agag's crown  
And kingdom. Ah, 'tis well : the King is good.

SAUL.

Die rather, die ! If thou hast lost thy crown,  
Worship or fear of men, thy pride, thy power,  
Freedom, and range of action, what hath life ?  
Methinks if I from such a height could fall  
To such vile flats, I'd pray the nearest hand  
To strike me cold. The earth is all too mean  
For the soul's longings : but to live a slave  
To happier slaves, and see its victors thrive  
And laugh in their pride's gladness, this were worse  
To the great heart than death beyond all doom.

AGAG.

Why didst thou tread, then, on thy servant's neck ?

SAUL.

Ay, ay, ay, why ? Am I not too a slave ?  
Doth not He reign ? doth not He drive ? what hand  
Hath power to smite *Him* ? is *He* not *my* king ?  
Why hath He trampled on thy neck and mine ?

AGAG.

The King's god is a god of love—'tis said.

SAUL.

'Tis said.

AGAG.

He giveth life : why take it away ?

SAUL.

He giveth life, He giveth sickness, pain,  
Shame. I would take not life away, that holds  
One drop of wine within the goblet . . (Tush,  
Why reason with the dull idolater ?) . .  
Go free, go free, Agag,—ay, free, go free . . .  
Why art thou come, Samuel ?

16 *THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.*

SAMUEL.

Ask thou thine heart.

SAUL.

I ask of thee.

SAMUEL.

To learn of thee thy deeds

In the ear of God.

SAUL.

Go out toward Shur, if death

Yield a sweet savour to thy nostrils ; go.

I numbered them in Telaim, my hosts—

Two hundred thousand footmen, and of Judah

Ten thousand. Question thou the wolf and dog !

My soul 's aweary of these bloody feasts.

SAMUEL.

God groweth weary of thy weariness.

Thy face is darkened with a lie ; thy soul

Filthy rebellion houses in for lair.

Hear, Saul, and answer in Jehovah's eyes :

Hast thou obeyed ?

SAUL.

I let the Kenites go.

SAMUEL.

Hast thou obeyed ?

SAUL.

I have shown gratitude.

SAMUEL.

Take thou His sceptre, Saul—go up, go up,  
Thou judge of God !

SAUL.

Thy God is merciful !

SAMUEL.

His name is mercy.

SAUL.

In the morning time  
Of Israel, we forth from Egypt came,

18 *THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.*

And greatly suffered, of the ravening tribes  
Inhospitable thwarted and opposed :  
But of the Kenites kindness did we drink.  
I have requited them.

SAMUEL.

And thou shalt be  
Requited, Saul, who art more rich of mercy  
Than Merciful God. What meaneth on the wind  
The bleating of the sheep, the lowing of kine ?  
Whence ~~come~~ yon people bound ? their countenances  
Have not the marks of Israel. Whence is ~~he~~,  
The craven, crafty, cruel, cringing slave,  
That ~~rolls~~ his hands, and grins, and twists his eyes,  
Like a fallen tyrant who would rise again,  
Though he should crawl upon his belly up  
To clutch a throne ?

SAUL.

Nay, for his body is fair.  
Why waste, why ruin the world's comely things ?



SAMUEL.

Who shall make clear the cornfield of its tares  
By shearing with an hook their delicate tops ?  
Away with all of these. It is God's will.

AGAG.

O man of God, O sovran man of God,  
I pray thee be not angered with thy servant :  
He hath repented ; he hath bowed the knee  
To thy just God. Lock chains to Agag's limbs,  
Make him thy slave, thy poor despisèd slave,  
But be not hard to visit him with pain . . .  
Yet were death sweeter, hearing now this word,  
And all the ruin of my conqueror.

SAMUEL.

I know thee, read thee to thine inmost core,  
And whence thy fawning words, thy supple shifts  
Of arms and neck and knees, and thy mean smiles...  
Away with him ! . . . yea, wouldst thou shield him,  
Saul?

SAUL.

I swear that he shall live: am I not King?

SAMUEL.

A greater King hath sworn.

SAUL.

Stay thou thine hand.

The grave is a gorged snake too full for food,  
And scarce will thank thee for his dusky frame.  
Nay, surely God hath drunk enough revenge!

SAMUEL.

Out, out, blasphemer! I Am that I Am,  
Saith God the Lord, the Inscrutable One God,  
By whom, in whom, and for whom are the worlds.  
Measure thyself with Him, thou blade of grass  
That wouldst withstand the infinite raging seas!  
Before thou wast, or the Earth, mother of thee—  
Thou grain of dust in deserts of thick sand,—  
There rose the rebel Satan, prince of the air,

To pluck Him from His seat (whom I in dreams  
Beheld arise, and in his ruin behold  
Sin vanquished and triumphant virtue throned).  
He through the infernal deeps unfathomable,  
Down-flung, fell years on years, and knows no rest,  
Wandering in fires, who, though an angel high  
Among the ever-living throngs of heaven,  
Could probe not God or reconcile His ways  
With his faint, sick conception of a god,  
So stretched presumptuous hands in his poor pride  
To uproot the eternal realm. Who can discern  
'Twixt good or foul save One? Obey His hests,  
Thou shalt not do aught ill. Ye are but fools,  
Confusing Pain with Evil, Virtue's self  
With Ease, and God with Man, and have no tongue  
For naming, and no skill to crown with names  
Seeming antagonisms of mortal thought  
In His that made you reconcileable  
From unbegun to unconcluding Time.  
Wilt thou the rebel spirit choose for guide,  
And not the fearful instinct of the soul  
Speaking with God's voice in thee? Perish, then,

22 *THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.*

In thy most impotent strife. But know, O Saul.  
He is most high who humblest at God's knees  
Lies, loving God, and trusting though He smite ;  
And vaster deed in His wide universe  
Is not for mortal or immortal hand  
Than that which He through hand of creature works  
Or more august, or boundless, or sublime.  
But, since thou hast rejected Him who sways,  
Thou art rejected from the rule of these  
His people; from thy hands the sceptre drawn,  
And given to another : and my heart,  
O Saul, Saul, breaks for thee: but me no more  
A living shape shalt thou behold, nor I  
Upon thy neck shed ever one more tear . . .  
Lead Agag forth into the midmost camp.

SAUL.

Gone, and my glory gone with him, and here  
This trouble in my breast ! I curse Thee, God !  
Where is Thy mercy, where Thy pity, where  
The nobleness of godhead which we seek,  
Who dost so torture, blind, and bruise, and maim

Thy pitiable slaves? Yea, though so weak,  
'Tis noblest to resist, and, having fallen,  
Remember valiant war, than crawl to death  
And wake to memories of a craven life . . .

**CAPTIVES.**

All hope now darkened, all bliss departed,  
The cup of His anger must all drink and die ;  
Farewell, ye who loved us, who wait, broken-hearted,  
And call to us sweetly and hear no reply.  
Ah gentle mother, ah sister, ah maiden,  
Ah head white with burthen of beautiful years,  
Ah dear, dear brother, ah friend love-laden,  
Ye kneel at His throne with an offering of tears :  
He will hear no pleading, whose keen sword smiteth.  
He is just, He is good, we who judge are but wind :  
With death pain dieth, new life the soul lighteth,  
All ill is but ill to the soul here blind !

**SAUL.**

So think ye? It is well, and sucks the sting  
Out of the flesh. What if ye wake and find

24 *THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.*

The soul in deeper darkness, keener pain?  
What if this painful life the sweetest is  
Of all He yieldeth of His lavish hurt?  
Or what if, missing happiness in this,  
Ye miss all opportunity of joy  
Time granteth, finding neither hope again,  
Nor any flicker of life itself? Ye slaves,  
Who thank Him for a gift He hath not given,  
And call Him good, lest, naming Him a devil,  
Ye draw down wrath from Him that is not good,  
Man's maker and destroyer and tormentor,  
That never slips the victim from His clutch  
Save but to whet its appetite of bliss  
Through momentary liberty,—outstretched,  
A crouched beast, athwart His universe,  
Licking with lithe soft tongue the trembling prey,  
With eyes of cruel gladness glaring keen.  
Give me a sword, give me a javelin, ho!  
Which way hath Samuel gone? Stand back, ye  
fools . . .  
Let no one follow the King's going . . . back!

ISRAELITES.

Ah, a new sorrow  
For Israel groweth !  
As the waves the wind bloweth  
Make havoc of ships  
In the deserts of sea,  
All these from whose lips,  
Made alight with our kisses,  
Came songs of a morrow  
Of freedom, of blisses  
In legions let free,  
ve arisen with madness of anger, knee fronting  
to knee,  
d blacken with shadow of battle their promise of  
splendour to be.

JONATHAN [*coming from the tents*].

at aileth, friends, that in so brief a space  
umph is fallen to mourning?

ISRAELITES.

O beloved,  
O bud of Israel's hope unfolding fair,  
Earth hath broke open where we laid our walls  
To build. Our well whereto we sped to wet  
Dry tongues and burning lips, where green boughs  
waved,  
Is a dry cup of bitter dust for us.  
How can they live whose king hath warred on God?

JONATHAN.

What tidings do ye darken so with words ?  
I know not, but my heart takes cold in me,  
As though a blade of keen and icy steel  
Lay close upon it : and a tongue within  
Tells clearer than ye speak, the floods are high  
Far up the valleys, and the river-grass  
In little time will lie bowed low and bent.  
A full-arm'd trouble standeth at the doors.

ABNER.

Ah, woe, woe ! there hath fallen out of heaven



Black night and horror. While I stood afar,  
Came Agag with the guard, and as mine eyes  
Rested in pity on his shifting face,  
Strode down the Prophet, and the wrath of God  
Hung fierce along his firm and awful brow ;  
He straight toward Amalek, like a slow strong wave  
Moved on inevitable ; then, more swift  
Than swoops an eagle, from a soldier's arm  
Snatching an axe, he turned him face to face,  
High raised it, double-handed, and bore down  
Cleaving the head of Agag to the throat ;  
And as the trunk fell writhing on the stones,  
Four times the arms and thighs he hewed, till blood  
Splashed like the spirted spray on many a face  
Pale with amaze and fear, and down his robe  
Ran like a rain, and o'er his sandals rose  
A bubbling pool. Then cast he far aside  
The blooded weapon, and wrapt round with storm  
And anger, heeding none, passed on and out  
Beyond the camp, swift striding. While we stood  
Stricken and mute, there rose a shout, "The King!"  
And lo ! the King came down into the midst,

And when he saw that sight he cried aloud,  
As cries a strong beast stung with many spears,  
Then lifted up his hand to Heaven, and shook  
His sword as at an enemy, turned to me,  
And said, "Which way went Samuel?" and I bowed  
My head, and answered, "Thither, through the camp,  
And out toward Ramah:" and, ere the words  
Left me, the King had broken through the midst,  
And gone on following him : we watched him go,  
As some great bark driven of the steadfast wind ;  
Till on a sudden swerved he from the track,  
And beat his brow and stamped the clodded earth,  
As though he fought with devils : even now  
Terribly through the tents he goeth down  
Raging, and whirling in his mighty hand  
A sword that sings dividing the swift air,  
His robe flung from him, and his granite breast  
And arms great-thewed made naked ; and his eyes  
Flame like red balls rolled from the thunder-cloud,  
And all his face is as a kindling fire.

## ISRAELITES.

Lo, hither cometh he ! The King, the King !  
Our hearts bow in us like the olive-woods  
All one way in the wind, nor have we strength  
To stand before that awful form inflamed  
With wrath like thunders in the swollen rack.  
Stay ye : incline the head ; for God is here—  
His hand is heavy on the stricken King.

## SAUL.

Away from me : ye would betray your King :  
Ye have no heart to stand against a God  
That worketh evil. With my single arm  
I do defy Him ! Get ye down, ye leaves  
That dangle all a-tremble on the tree,  
Laugh in the wind that smites you. Back,—get  
down,  
Back to your mother's paps that suckled you,  
Babes, noway men. But if ye move not hence,  
Falling upon you, I will strew the rocks  
With slaughter, till mine arms are numbed and dead.

[*They disperse.*]

A world of ruin, of ruin, Thou hard God !  
 Is the deep earth so starved, and Thy dry dust  
 So hungered that Thou feedest clay with clay ?  
 Thou makest of our bodies, withering slowly,  
 Bread for the ravenous clods, and our despair  
 Wild draughts for Thy derision's drunkenness :  
 Our youth's dear dreams Thy lewd hours baffling  
 break,

And tread our hopes to death, as laughing youths  
 Leap on the wine-vats running o'er with wine ;  
 Love for love famishes, grows lean and wan,  
 And bitterness takes captive the lorn breast ;  
 Bloom of the cheek and of the soul are spent,  
 And old-loved lives grow loathly ; ay, we fall  
 Sear, and each other find not ; veiled from Thee,  
 Flattering the heart, we love, the brain, we know,  
 And cannot love Thee for the things we know.  
 A world of ruin, of ruin. What are these  
 Dim eyes that turn in languid wonder cold  
 To mine forgetful ? whose the trembling limbs ?  
 Whose the hoar locks the hot winds lift, and laugh ?  
 Is this the boy I claspt in boyhood's glee ?

Where is the promise of his soul, and where  
 The raven hair, the bloom, the smile, the love ?  
 Pass, thing of clay ! what knows my heart of thee ?  
 Ah, who are these that come, a sable throng ?  
 Thy face is changed as with a death-change grim ;  
 Thou ~~hast~~ no power to move me with thy flesh,  
 Thou waif of womanhood. Pass, phantoms chill,  
 Shadows of life, faint mockeries of truth,  
 Limned for ~~boy's~~ pastime or for devils' whim,  
 Pass from ~~my~~ sight, and leave me with the sun !  
 The dead are earth, the living, as the dead,  
 Corpse-like transformed through years and utter  
 wrong

From those I loved, and I that loved them walk  
 The withered leafy ways, a lonely soul—  
 They, the rath buds of girlhood, spoilt of worms,  
 And they, the youths that would have climbed to  
 heaven

Dashed to the ground, to ravin with the dogs,  
 And growl at one another in the mire,  
 With streaming jaws, and eyes that glare blood-red,  
 Spurned by Thy foot. The weaker as the strong

32 *THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.*

Are smitten ; yea, the sockets of soft eyes  
Are stuffed with earth, and cold is all desire ;  
Cold are the eastern and the western skies ;  
Sweet dreams the parching east wind bites and slay  
We find, we fail, my soul itself hath lost.  
I dream but of a dream. Another dawn,  
This wave of life heaves, breaks, and one whi  
wreath  
Of foam to the wide surge of sea will cling  
A moment, then Thy waters roll at play.  
What hast Thou done that Thou shouldst cry f  
love,  
Or any homage of the failing knees ?

SCENE III. *On the heights of Bethlehem.*

DAVID.

I WOULD yon little cloud had spread his wing,  
Soared into heaven, and left the mountain bare,  
That I might see if any shepherd-lad  
Had led his sheep, or goatherd his black goats

So far to-day. Some morning I will climb  
Up thither with the flock, and where the tree,  
The fan-like emerald pine, outspreads his boughs,  
I'll **make** an odorous tent, and pipe alone,  
Far off, and watch the kine that bask and sleep  
In the hot sun below. I marvel well  
If one might from that rocky pinnacle  
Spy the great sea they tell of, with its ships.  
And there cool winds will fan me, from the west  
Roaming, mayhap with scents of Lebanon  
And its old cedars, or a sweet sea-smell  
From that vast wave whereon the merchants ride  
From the isles, and peoples of the utmost world ;  
While from the fresh green sward betwixt the rocks  
Cool thyme and grass the sheep will nip at peace,  
And the mild air will fill my lambs with glee.  
Ha, ha, the merry winds that love the hills  
Have wakened the dull cloud, and up he soars :  
See, in a moment he will die away,  
Caught in the sky's blue arms—white, white ;  
now grey ;  
Now like a puff of smoke of olive-wood ;

34 *THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.*

Now—gone—aha ! I thank you, winds and sky !  
There is my silvery mountain sparkling white  
In the sun's glory. Not a sheep or goat  
Anywhere. I had been the king of it,  
King-shepherd of the silvery mountain-height.  
The breeze hath crept adown, and swept the boughs  
Of the lithe olive-grove ; how white it shines,  
All the leaves turned against the sun ! How good  
To be i' the midst, and hear them even now  
Clapping their tiny merry palms to chime  
Glad music ! Hist, what noise is in the brake ?  
Come up, come up, come hither, hither, hither !  
This lamb will ever thrust his glossy nose  
Up in my face for kisses when I call.  
Go to, then. Hither ! Ah, 'tis Leah coming  
For water with her pitcher to the well :  
And ever singing ! Who hath hair like hers ?  
All gold ; no brighter thing in God's sweet world,  
Or lovelier to the eyes, save the gold cloud  
At sunset rippled by the kindling wind.

MESSENGER (*breaking through the trees*).

Ho, David, David, David !



DAVID.

What would they

With David, now?

MESSENGER.

Yea, have I found thee, lad?

'Tis well : up, up, and run unto thy home.

A great thing dawns for thee.

DAVID.

Nay, wherefore go,

And leave the flock?

MESSENGER.

Lo, Samuel calleth thee.

DAVID.

This is a strange word. Take thou, then, my staff;

And I will run to them. But go thou down

With Leah to the well, and help her draw

The water. Tell her, David sent thee down.

## ACT II.

SCENE I. *Going up toward Ramah.*

SAMUEL, *ascending wearily, sits to rest.*

SAMUEL.

AH, yonder is the mountain where he sprang,  
Comelier than all the sons of Israel.  
There was none like him of the youths that roam  
'Twixt Gilead's purple hills and the wide sea,  
Whose voice the sheep know 'mid the tawny grass,  
Or hand is firm upon the spear or bow—  
None, for his breast was as the rock, his thighs  
Like the wild olives in their strength ; his palms  
Gat hold as doth the lion's clenched jaw ;  
Lithe as the leopard in the tinkling hedge  
Of the tall canes where rivers wet the vale,

His feet more swift than wings of the blue bird  
That shoots o'er Jordan by the willow-wands ;  
His countenance was like a goodly dawn,  
And rosier than the cloven pomegranate ;  
Blue as the ripple of Galilee his eyes ;  
His voice more sweet than any breeze's cry  
In tamarisk or palm-tree by the wells ;  
And in his heart God was ; and all my flesh  
Turned toward him as a mother to her babes,  
To love to him as a father to his sons—  
    all forlorn, and slighted of mine own.  
O God, God, wilt Thou not withdraw Thine hand  
    from him for a little from his fallen head,  
    giving him might to see Thee as Thou art,  
    merciful ; not in darkness wrap Thy face,  
    and leave him with that horror in his heart,  
    to judge Thee ill by ill not born of Thee ?  
    To lift his majesty o'erthrown, and fire  
    to gain the lamp of hope within the breast,  
    whereof bereft no man can bear his night.  
    . Thou goest down, O sun, and all my heart  
    sails with thee. Lo, thy crimson javelins

38 *THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.*

Thou hurlest, as thou hurriest to the sea,  
Athwart ten thousand mountain-peaks that stream  
Blood-red at thy wild onset. Yonder loom  
Moab and Gilead, purple in the night  
That even now hath spread her Æthiop hands,  
Shadowing : there rolls Jordan in the cleft,  
Muffled below his jungle of thick shrub,  
Willow and oleander and tall reeds,  
And banded by soft grass he keepeth green,  
Bounteous, o'erflowing : north, black Ophrah's peal  
Soars upward like a rebel proud desire :  
Below, how fair the valleys, and the fields  
Of waving corn how fair, and all the groves  
Of shimmering olives, and the dark green bower  
Of fig-trees, and the girdling of the vines !  
There springs the spikēd aloe creamy-flowered :  
There the great cactus' white-tongued bell of fire  
Burns : there the rose of Sharon, and the flax  
Yellow and blue : and higher, on the slope,  
Browse the brown sheep : and up the stony track  
The mild-mouthed camels stride, from farthest land  
Laden with silks and spices : and a chief

Rides out across the wold with lifted spear :  
Yonder, as in the hollow of a hand  
Holding it forth, a jewel of rare price,  
Firm on her height, standeth Jerusalem :  
And there the little Bethlehem, rose-red  
In the sunset, blushes on her rocky ridge . . .  
O land of long desire, for which our souls  
Panted, too goodly art thou, and too fair !  
Sin blinds the eyes to beauty, and our hearts  
Are filthied with their brood of fleshly dreams.  
Thou seest not, O Israel ; thine eyes  
Love not her face ; thou art not clean for love :  
And, loving not the wonder of His deeds,  
How canst thou find God nigh, and cling to Him ?  
O, was it not enough that everywhere  
Shone clear the print and impress of His hands,  
And His foot's traces o'er the hills and fields  
Glimmered before you, and the winds, His breath,  
Bathed you, and bore sweet odours from the seas,  
But ye should doubt His careful visitings  
By moon and sun, and pauseless government,  
And choose a man for master of your lives,

•

Not seeing that the larger liberty  
 Is where God only rules, and on this crust  
 There is scant freedom anywhere for men  
 Where any man hath sway ?

As I went up

Toward Bethlehem, along the treeless heights,  
 A vulture hovering eager o'er the track,  
 Made me seek round about if any prey  
 Lingered anear, and sudden, like a bat,  
 Fluttered a tiny bird into my breast  
 For shelter in my garment's open folds,  
 For there was no bush nigh or any bank  
 Wherein to hide itself : its little heart  
 Knocked at my bosom, and its sad black eye  
 Peered fearfully without and in my face.  
 I bore it thus over the hill, and down  
 Below the sycamores, and then it rose  
 And flitted to the boughs, and chirpt and sang,  
 Forgetful. Thee, O Israel, of old  
 E'en thus, or like a lost and bleating kid  
 Rain-smitten on the mountains, did I clasp  
 Pitying, and fed thee with sweet milk, and housed

Under the woven branches of my tent :  
Now, art thou gone from me, and hast forgot  
My mercies, and the God who led us twain  
Into one path when life was strange to thee.  
Let be : I would not bind thy growing limbs  
Or curb the glad ambition of thy soul.  
'Twixt the old order and the new I stand,  
Hoar-headed, but with heart yet lithe to twine  
What way the sun moves, lord of life and light.  
Man was not made to freeze to fixed form,  
Like peak or promontory, or to flow  
But one way with the rivers of the vale,  
But, ever changeful, grow, nor cease to grow  
Here, nor beyond the realm of gloom or dawn,  
While God moves with His moving universe :  
But through dark ways, and many a gulf of fire,  
Self-wounded, self-perplext, he journeyeth,  
Till the last ill and deepest night of night  
Be past, and he hath found the tombless fields ;  
Being strong to choose, self-blinded, choosing griefs,  
And trouble, and the poisonous fruits and wine,  
Puffed up with gifts, forgetting Him who gave :

42 *THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.*

And, for thy heart among all peoples throbs  
Proudest, thy mouth less yieldeth to the bit,  
And thy feet lead thee to the paths of pain,  
O Israel, I cry to God for thee,  
And for thee, Saul, most wayward, whom they serve  
Nor cease to cry till comes the inevitable  
Strong hand to smite me on the lips, and press  
Mine eyelids on mine eyes in awful sleep,  
And that which lives goes upward to its home.

SCENE II.

GIBEAH. *The KING'S House.*

SAUL, *lying on the ground.* ABNER and JONATHAN

ABNER.

WHEN hath he spoken?

JONATHAN.

Since thou wentest forth

But once.



ABNER.

So lay as if in sleep !

JONATHAN.

Yea, thus

as long time, even as thou seest. But first  
his loud voice, lifting up imploring eyes,  
cried to God, in fierce rebellious wrath,  
slay him suddenly with bolts of flame  
let the earth gape wide and swallow him,  
my love He had, pity, or care,  
rather than once more torture his sick brain  
his shapes that quenched the reason, and a dream  
so terrible to endure. Then up and down  
strode, loud moaning, till the gathering pain,  
coming upon him, hurled him to the ground,  
where strove he in wild ire, his knees and arms  
as if as a wrestler's, with invisible foe,  
wholly spent, relaxing his locked limbs,  
death-like he rolled with feet and face to heaven,  
his curv'd hands laid far along the floor :  
lay he many moments, mute and pale :

44 *THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.*

Then, as one moves in sleep, he drew his knees  
Together, and turned groaning on his breast,  
And veiled his face among the raiment-folds  
Gathered betwixt his wreathen arms, as now.

ABNER.

God answereth with boon more beautiful  
Than that we pray for, and hath given him sleep.  
Sit thou upon yon side, as though sweet rest  
Had lulled thee also ; I will sit on this ;  
That when he turns his eyes on thee or me,  
It will not seem as though we stayed to watch,  
Deeming aught strange in him, and Reason, soothed  
With gentlest flattery, grow assured and strong,  
And mount again her throne.

SAUL.

Arise, arise !

O Son, O Abner, come ye near to me.  
Take each a palm ; bend close and kiss my cheek.  
Swear to me I have never yet with sword  
Or hand or tongue done aught to bring you hurt.

ABNER.

ay, King, for thou hast girdled us with love.

SAUL (*rising*).

know not whether of the womb of sleep  
he horrid dream had birth, or came with those  
hat thron'd the sunbeams in mine open sight . . .  
aking, it came, for I have no way slept.  
ll I have loved stood round about my knees  
lood-stained, with faces fiendlike in their rage—  
hou, Abner! thou, O Jonathan, my son!  
ven ye, turned loathsome, with foul fiery eyes  
laring upon me, scarred with grimy wounds  
n cheek and forehead, filthied with wet dust,  
'ith clench'd hand menacing, or shaken sword,  
ttering my name in hate. O, bend to me,  
hat I may read your loved and gentle brows,  
nd take the print and image of each face  
ove-lighted on these aching daz'd balls,  
ashed of that other memory. O belov'd,  
is a world of fire wherein I move  
e reckon not of: for ye have cool sweet blood,

Are masters of yourselves, and in the brain  
Ye lay your thoughts together in fair shapes,  
Cast out, or keep, compare, or pile them high,  
Building what way ye will, for Fancy's bliss  
Or Reason's, walking with wide, happy eyes,  
Beholding, and believing, all things well ;  
And you the earth yields freely of her good :  
But me no more the kindly images  
Re-gladden of the stars or of the fields,  
But visions of the worst the wide earth holds,  
Broken, confused, swarm thick, or roll in clouds  
Thunderous and streaked with bands of blood or  
flame :

And He, the Lord of these, to whom ye bow,  
Ever beyond them looms upon His throne,  
With dark face turned to me, implacable,  
Moveless, and brows of anger like the night  
No hand can press away—the inevitable  
Fierce God, my maker, and my enemy,  
Against whose will suggestions of deep hell  
Drive me to war with hate that hath no pause.

JONATHAN.

O King, I kneel, and clasp thy feet, in awe  
Of thy dark soul, and cry as unto gods :  
Bow down : for wherefore makes He kings of men,  
But that men finding in their goodly lives  
Likeness of perfect godhead, unto Him  
May cleave, and trust Him more ?

SAUL.

O, press thy face  
To mine, dear lad ; lean back, and let me gaze  
On thy brave brows. Ye cannot come to me  
In that fierce world ; ye cannot sooth me there,  
Or quench the pitiless burning of my lips.  
Take firm grip of my hands, and hold me here . . .  
Nay, I glide from thee, drifting far and far . . .

DAVID (*within*).

Fill me with love of Thee, fill me with light,  
The music of Thy spirit, and the bliss  
Of being as a song upon Thy lips,  
Of Thee and in Thee, no way mine own self,  
That I prevail to work, O Lord, Thy will !

SAUL.

Release me from the horror of Thy hell !

ABNER.

Mark well his face and stillness of his limbs :  
 So is it oftentimes with him ; for he stands  
 Thus as if chiselled with the graver's hand,  
 A dumb white god down gazing with blind eyes,  
 Bent from his spear, and will not lift his face  
 For word or sign till all that dream has ebbed ;  
 And then the thunder of his anger breaks.

DAVID (*within, singing*).

His face was like the golden light on sheaves  
 All gold amid the harvest good,  
 Who came to me below the terebinth leaves,  
 Where my tent stood :  
 My soul was very sick with silent woe,  
 Long lonely borne without a friend,  
 Seeing the doom of souls around me grow,  
 Pain without end ;  
 Seeing that life is brittle as a reed,  
 And one heart's hurt the wound of ten,

And years yield only darkness for the need  
Of questioning men :  
But like the morn he came, with shining feet,  
And where the rivulets wind apart,  
Sate down, and drew me 'mid the grasses sweet  
Near to his heart,  
And laid his arm about my neck, and told  
In many a soft and mellow word  
Of bliss, of life the glimmering worlds enfold—  
My Christ and Lord !

## SAUL.

His voice is as the running waters blythe  
To my scorch'd brain ; and ever as he sings  
A cool wind fans me, and old thoughts and dear  
Come rushing on my mind like a glad sea.  
Fetch the lad hither. 'Tis a little cloud  
That yields a one-hour shadow, and no more,  
And earth and heaven are as a yelling fire  
Around me and above me. By this spear,  
I would that Death might drown me in his deeps  
Of icy coldness, here and at this breath,

But that I know not what more horrible  
He worketh who hath heart to work this woe :  
We change lean joys for leaner, as we yield  
Child's weakness for man's miserable strength,  
And nothing comes more fair than that which goes.  
O rather than endure the throes of thought  
I would I were the clinging, helpless babe  
Locked to my mother's breast, clasp'd in his arms  
Who called me son and whispered all is well ;  
They hid the void eternity, and night  
Had never ghastly shape, nor death his dread,  
Their voices murmuring near me, and their arms  
Guarding. But O to gaze into the deeps,  
Friendless, alone, and neither voice nor arm  
Of man or God arise to quell this fear !

DAVID.

How is it with my lord ?

SAUL.

Come nigh me, lad.

I held thy faith a madness of the blood,



But I have learned full well thy trustiness,  
Thy courage, and thy love. If to command  
Be valour's crown, and thy desire of sway  
Vex thee, let be. My heart is faint and sick,  
Mine arm is broken, and mine eyes are blind ;  
And I, the very bastion of the realm  
And pillar of my people, reel aloof  
Beneath a buckler's burthen : and the hosts,  
Fear-stricken, tremble like a timorous girl ;  
And for that I have sorrowed many noons  
For Israel, and have no might to help,  
And only thou hast courage and young hope ;  
Be thou the arm and empire of thy king,  
And stand forth in his fields ; and may thy God,  
Whom thou so trustest, well reward thy faith,  
As He requiteth their unfaith who fail !

*DAVID.*

O King, I know not through what ways He moves,  
Or in what shape, or by what name is known  
Among the numberless white throngs of heaven ;  
Nor from what womb had birth, if ever were

Beginning of His days to whom no end ;  
Whether with word or hand He spreads the grass  
Green in the sunbeams, and hath filled the gulfs  
With water, and hath cloven the river-ducts,  
And set the anemones by the olive-woods ;  
Nor why the hollows sparkle with His worlds  
Unsearchable ; nor why His wildernesses  
Swarm, and the sea swarms, and the living air,  
With lions, or with leopards, or with wolves,  
The snakes, or the swift fishes, or the birds  
Blue, golden, white, and red, the butterflies  
Bright-winged, the gnats, the locusts, or the bees ;  
Nor why man is, who lifts his eyes to heaven  
And cradles with the worms ; nor what for him  
Was, nor what shall be when his hands drop down  
And sleep is on his eyelids. But I know  
He liveth, and the worlds are all too mean  
To hold His glory ; and the worst is well.  
And when the sweet winds fondle, lo ! mine eye  
Visions a Hand that cools my branded brows  
For pity ; when the sun on lonely hills  
Drives back the night and cold, and fingers numb

Grow firm upon the staves, I dream of One  
Who winds me in warm raiment from the frost  
For pity, and I sing to Him for joy ;  
If sickness or if sorrow drown my soul,  
Arms are about me, and my head is couched  
Lightly upon a shoulder leaning nigh,  
The breath as of a watcher o'er my breast  
Steals, as the breeze steals lisp'ing in the leaves,  
And soft hair falls upon my neck and cheek,  
And eyes filled full with love are bent on mine,  
And my lips murmur " Father," and He hears :  
I set my knees amid the mountain-grass,  
And cry with palms uplifted all my pain  
And passion of my soul, and all desire,  
And I am eased at heart, and though for days  
He tarry, and for months, the merciful  
Dear God, at last His blessings in my lap  
Fall like the rain, and I have all my prayer.  
And I would tune with His my wayward will,  
And follow the sweet instinct of the breast  
As the birds seek the sunlands, and the bees  
The flowery fields, for this is safe and good ;

54 *THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.*

So with wild impulse have I fought with beasts,  
And slain the serpent ; so have sung strange songs  
Of things that are or shall be, while I've heard  
A voice not mine make music with the strings ;  
And so will live, obeying as He bids,  
And drinking all the wonder of His world,  
Until He draw me nearer, and I see  
Hereafter that High Temple where He dwells :  
And I am but an arrow in His hand  
To pierce thine enemies, O King, and save  
The glory and the soul of Israel.

SAUL.

I love thee for thy beauty, and thy strength,  
And thy young heart that hath not ta'en the world  
Thy wisdom is boy's folly, false and fair—  
So fair, so false, I well could weep warm drops  
To think how years will prove it fantasy.  
And gladness of thy youth is well-nigh gone,  
Seeing thou dost aspire to draw the praise  
Of wretched men, and rule them with thy rod.  
Let some will stand betwixt thee and the void

Whence comes no voice for succour or command,  
Nor crave the cup of kings. But thou wilt revel  
A little in the bounty of the earth,  
Following thy passion, trusting in thy good,  
Till passion will undo thee, and its fruits  
Curse thee, and thou shalt stand against thy God  
A rebel at the last, as even I,  
Thy hoary hair bowed low, and all thy life  
Turned into troublous ways. O, get thee hence,  
For sorrow floods my chalice to the brims.  
Follow him, Abner, go with him, my son ;  
Prepare ye for the battle, for my heart  
Is heavy for my people, and I droop,  
A wounded king, made coward of the mind.

*JONATHAN.*

Thou child of God, to whom my soul cleaves fast  
As the rock-rooted vine-tree, wind thine arm  
So, close with mine—my brother, and my king !

SCENE III.

*In the KING'S House.* MICHAL.

MICHAL.

As the ground-ivy around the violets  
 So is my love's hair loosed about his eyes ;  
 His hands are carven ivory, and his neck  
 Ruddier than roses, and his breath is sweet  
 As the torn cedar-boughs. I heard his foot  
 Sweep through the grasses : then my breath caught  
 fast

As my heart bounded in me ; then my breast  
 Grew rosy warm, and my neck flushed for love,  
 And I flamed, shuddering. As he past, his eyes  
 Darted their fire upon me, and his lips  
 Lightened as doth the morning. Then I cowered  
 Quivering, then I yearned to clutch his knees,  
 Crying, Take me, O king, and slay me with fierce  
 love !

His knees are knotted firmer than an oak ;

They are lithe as tamarisk trees : his limbs are brown  
With labouring in the sun ; they are round, they are  
strong

As pillars of the tents : his feet are smooth  
As wood well-polished ; they are arched above  
The sandals : my love's arms can draw the bow  
Till it snaps beyond the arrow-tip : his shoulders  
Spread like the palms : the girdle round his waist  
Is little : his breast heaves as doth the sea.

I cried, I love thee, I love thee more than all

The women of Israel their loves : thy breast

Is warmer than the sun for me ; thy hair

Is goodlier than the sunbeams ; as the fields

Filled with the sunlight, so my senses are

When thou art nigh me ; as the olive woods

Billowing in the hot winds from the dry

Waste places, are my pulses in thy power ;

I love thee with my body and my soul.

I cried, I will possess thee, and none else,

And only I possess thee : thou shalt be

Lord over me, and none above thee reign

Mistress ; thine arm shall wind no woman's neck

Save this, thy head for love or weariness  
Lean on none other bosom : yea, my love  
Is fire, and I could strike thee through the side,  
And trample all thy dear dead comeliness,  
To keep thy beauty from another's kiss.  
He passed : he stayed not : yet my soul went forth  
And touched, and kissed him ; yea, I felt my lips  
Made sweet with his. His voice is as the birds  
In the cool valleys, when his eyes are raised  
Over the lute-frame and his hands are swift  
Among the strings. O come, my king, my love,  
Come, draw me to thee. I have waited long,  
As maidens stand for kisses of their loves,  
Athirst, though they will move not, or one word  
Utter of all their longing. He shall be  
My spouse at last : yea, love was in his eyes,  
And his lips parted, and he gasped for love.  
My spouse shall be the bravest of the leaders  
Of Israel : to my spouse shall every neck  
Stoop ; and the women in their jealousy  
Shall hate me.

.



SAUL (*entering*).

I sought never to be king ;

I did not crave or clamour to be born  
Out of my mother's womb : but, being born  
A man, I would have all a man's delights ;  
And being King, reign kingly. Let Him lift  
His heavy hand, and not withhold the crown  
And utmost of His gift. *He* would not love  
Divided lordship in His universe,  
Or palsy shed upon the sceptre-hand.  
I toiled long for His pleasure ; sacrificed  
Flesh for His nostrils ; fought His battles ; slew  
His enemies ; until a pity seized  
My soul, and weariness of blood and death.  
They said, He is a merciful, just God,  
And I was merciful and I was just.  
Then came the earthquake and the fire, His wrath  
Rolling upon me. If I had my slave,  
To-day, deal gently alway, and to-morrow  
Smote him, because, observing well my word,  
He had chidden and not scourged his fellow slave,

Where should he find my law, and how obey?  
And if he did revolt against my rod,  
And choose his will and reason for a guide,  
No longer my caprice and tyranny,  
Should he not find responsive rebel souls  
In all my bands, to strengthen either arm,  
And help him to uphold a separate realm?  
. . . There is no voice for help on any side  
Now, but an awful silence in mine ears,  
And I am left alone to search the night  
For glimmerings of a hand to point a goal :  
What marvel if I stumble, and my feet  
Fall in erroneous ways? . . . If there should come  
Victory now, and once again my hosts  
Cry, Saul yet lives, a glory and a strength,  
I might defy the curse, and set my throne  
Above all kings : yea, if the Philistine  
Be scattered on the morrow, and my people  
Forget the shadow lying o'er the land,  
I will arise, and gathering all my spears,  
Lead them against the heathen, and o'erthrow,  
And plant a giant empire in the earth,

Wide-ruling. But if failure or defeat  
Thwart me, I know mine Enemy, and Scourge . . .  
Michal!

MICHAL.

My father!

SAUL.

Michal, mine own child!  
Cling to me, Michal: I have need of love.  
Thou too dost reverence thy King, dost love  
Thy father, O my child!

MICHAL.

My King and father!

SAUL.

Thou hast sweet eyes, my daughter, and thy lips  
Are swift to speak sweet words.

JONATHAN and DAVID *pause at the doorway.*

Cling fast to me,  
I cannot lose thy beauty and thy love

And keep life whole, or courage, hope, or strength.  
 Merab, and Michal, and my three brave sons !  
 He shall not utterly defeat mine arm  
 Who leaveth me my children and their care.

MICHAL.

Though the sun dieth, I shall not forsake thee.

JONATHAN.

See how he stoops his kingly shoulders down  
 For the sweet pressure of her little hands.  
 When strong men lean for help upon the love  
 Of children, all they seeing well may weep.

SAUL.

Thou hast sweet eyes and kind, but thy strong love  
 Will worship but one idol.    Cling to me,  
 Dear child : let none betwixt me and thy soul  
 Move, darkening my lone and lampless world . . .  
 My head swims, my feet fail me ; lead me forth  
 Into the air.

MICHAL.

O, lean thine arm, my father,  
Close on my shoulder ; fear not ; I will bring thee  
To where the wind laps in the plane-tree leaves,  
The sweet wind blowing from the sunset-bars,  
With wings new-bathed amid the perfumed sea.  
Thine arm thus on my shoulder ; even so.

JONATHAN.

Friend, I will follow, with what help my hands  
And my soul's love may bear him.

DAVID.

When the moon  
Is risen, I will wander to the wells,  
And sit below the palm-trees.

JONATHAN

Yea, and there  
Tarry for me, for I would hear thee speak  
Over and over of thy mind's dear dreams ;

And talk of arms, and battle, and the hope  
Of Israel that darkens in this woe.

DAVID (*alone*).

When 'mid Thy terror-smitten universe  
Thou movest to the ruin of a world  
Or life of any of the sons of men  
Revoltant, who shall stay Thee with his arms,  
Or hold Thy feet from going ? Yet will I  
Cry to Thee, O Unseen, and lift my hands  
Entreating, that it may be for a month  
Or day, this evil from his house may fail  
On whom the people rest : but not alone  
That he so fair a burthen carrieth,  
And for their weal whose glory is Thy care,  
But seeing that man in arms against Thy will  
Is over-matched, and only wound on wound  
Can follow of the combat ; and the King  
Clouds folded like the hills obscure, and blot  
The mildness of Thy beauty from his eyes ! . . .  
Her hands are whiter than the lotus-cups ;  
Sapphire her veins ; her breasts are like twin blooms

Rocked in the branches. She hath taken hold  
Of all my soul : her wrists are on my neck,  
Her lips are warm upon my cheek and brows,  
Her eyes are wide with longing. May mine arms  
Clasp thee, my love ! may all thy wondrous hair,  
Dark as the yews, o'ershadow me ! Thy beauty  
Is deeper than the night, and terrible  
Thy love as the she-leopard's with her young . . .  
The curtains of the dawn are lifted ; light  
Everywhere ; the clouds are burned away . . .  
My soul reels as a drunkard ; I am drawn  
Onward, O Father, with unconscious feet,  
To that far fire and glory which in dream  
I visioned on my mountains. Let them scoff  
Because my life was little, and my years  
Few ; but Thy hand shall smite them on the lips.

ACT III.

SCENE I.    *Gibeah.    The people rejoicing.*

MERAB *and* MICHAL.

MERAB.

STAY, sister.    See them coiling round the hill,  
Flashing, a stream of fire : and see, the women  
Lead them with dances, and the mingled songs  
Of women and of men are on the air,  
The clashing of the cymbals and the cry  
Of the wild pipes blown shrill, and high aloft  
The helmet of the King o'er all the host  
Moves flaming ; yea, I see his breastplate heave,  
Mirroring the sun.

MICHAL.

I think I hear them shout  
Another name than Saul's, and all my strength



Fails me, and coldness creeps along my lips.  
I cannot watch with thee.

MERAB.

Nay, sister, stay :  
I am the victor's all-unwilling crown,  
Yet can I hear my doom, though sung as now  
By all the hearts of Israel in their mirth.

MICHAL.

And I would fain go down unto the streams,  
And cast my body in their blackest pool,  
So hearing thy doom sung.

MERAB.

What if the King  
Repented of that promise, and my soul  
Should feed in the green pastures of its love ?

MICHAL.

Better thy mother's womb had been my grave  
Than I should see thee in this shepherd's arms.  
Listen !

MERAB.

They laud him higher than the King.  
Dost thou not hear?

MICHAL.

My heart is very sick,  
My head is full of noises like the sea,  
Mine eyes reckon not.

WOMEN.

Not for the strong is the battle,  
Not for the old ;  
From the flocks of the goats on the mountain,  
The sheep in their fold,  
Young, and a yearling, he came,  
Overbold.

Fair are his limbs as the roebucks  
That bound on the height,  
And his face as the dawn when it kindleth  
The skirts of the night,  
Bringing the dreamers the day,  
And delight.

**MEN.**

We are strong now to dare,  
    With thy strength thou dost feed us ;  
In the teeth of despair  
    Thou hast found us, and freed us ;  
    O, arise in thy glory and lead us  
To vanquish the foes of our people, nor pity nor  
    spare.

**WOMEN.**

Sweet on the lips as wild-honey,  
    O David, thy name ;  
Not one of the elders has won him  
    Since Israel came  
Out of darkness, a fame to compare  
    With thy fame.

**MEN.**

We were faint with our fears,  
    And a horror crept o'er us,  
All night with our tears  
    We were set to deplore us,

Till he came as a god to restore us,  
Whose life is a star and whose splendour a light  
for the years.

MERAB.

Lo, Abner ! Trouble darkeneth his brows ;  
His head hangs on his bosom. Jonathan  
Smiles gaily, talking with the valiant youth,  
Glad at his victory : lighter seems his heart  
Than his he flattereth with his brave kind eyes.

MICHAL.

There is no pride upon the youth's fair face,  
But glad tranquillity. His cheek is flushed,  
And his eye burneth.

MERAB.

But alack, the King !

MICHAL.

I knew that he would fail not : when they laughed,  
Saying his strength is little, then my heart

Burned in me ; for he spake not as a youth  
Boastful, or mad with miserable pride,  
But with soft eyes, and meek solemnity.  
And still he triumphs !

MERAB.

But alack, the King !

MICHAL.

Dost thou not watch the women how they creep  
Near him, as though they thirsted for his smiles :  
His eyes are maddening like the wine : they press  
Close that his touch may kindle their quick blood.  
Dost thou not see, and curse them ?

MERAB.

Only he  
Draweth mine eyes to him—only my King :  
There is no triumph in *his* face, or pride  
As of a victor. See, his charger stoops,  
Nosing the ground, because the mighty hand  
Is dead upon the bridle. No one heeds

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My King : ah, pale and hollow is his face,  
And his eye lightless !

MICHAL.

They will pass this way  
Now in a little moment : how the throng  
Swirleth about us !

MERAB.

Abner seëth him ;  
Great care is heavy on his breast ; he moves  
Closer to him . . . faithful and firm, O Abner !

MICHAL.

Let us away, we tarry here too long.

MERAB.

They will halt here . . Stand back into the gloom,  
And watch a little longer. Ha ! the king  
Leaps from his charger : and the people stand  
Stricken with fear, and have no heart for songs,  
Seeing fell madness in his eyes again.  
He turns to them in anger.

SAUL.

Peace, every tongue.

I am weary of this fools' mirth. Go, get ye hence,  
Ye women to your weaving, and ye men  
Your labour in the fields. Ye shout and sing  
To-day, since victory is yours : to-morrow  
Ye will not dare a venture, if I plead ;  
Ye will not follow to a vaster strife,  
Though I your King crawl suppliant to your knees.  
Leave me at peace, here, by this oak, alone.  
Disperse. Your faces are a hell to me.

ISRAELITES.

But unto thee, O King, we have clung in our sorrow ;  
Bowed to thee dark locks and hoary,  
Followed thy banner to battle, and reaped on the  
morrow  
Harvest of glory :  
Loved thee and honoured thee, pined in the night  
of thine anguish,  
Stricken with pain ;

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Turn thee, O King, to thy God : lo, our hearts in us  
languish,  
Imploring in vain.

MERAB (*going to the King*).

My father !

SAUL.

Merab !—Thou hast gentle hands,  
My daughter ; thou art faithful, fond, and fair . . .  
I rend the oath to pieces . . thou shalt never  
Fall to the goatherd's flat.

MICHAL.

My father !

SAUL.

What !

Thine eyes are like an harlot's, full of lies  
And dear deceit. O, hide thee from my face !

MICHAL.

What hurt from Michal's hand ?



SAUL.

What hurt? I know not.

Thine eyes are false. What hurt? I have smelt the  
world:

I am suspicious. Get thee from my sight! . .

DAVID *and* JONATHAN *draw near him.*

Come thou within a spear's-throw of mine arm,  
And I will smite thee through thy whited breast.  
Avaunt, away from me, thou subtle slave.  
I read thee and the passion of thy heart,  
Thy plots rebellious, and thy earthy schemes.  
Shake him from off thee, Jonathan.

DAVID.

O King,

My soul knows only love : and I would live  
Obedient to thy voice, and seek no praise  
Or glory, save to be of all thy servants  
Truest and least.

SAUL.

Thou liest : for thy hands  
Reach higher than my shoulders, and thy lust

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Even to my brows. Take up thy beggar-scrip.  
Back to thy pinfolds !

JONATHAN.

Nay, but let my voice  
Plead for him.

SAUL.

Ha ! his hand is on thy throne,  
His meshes are about thee. Take him hence.

MICHAL.

O, God is in his heart.

SAUL.

Out, leachery !  
Thou art foul, woman ! . . . Touch me not ; my hand  
Is firm for his undoing.

JONATHAN.

I will stand  
Betwixt thine arm and him.

SAUL.

Fool, get thee back,  
Lest my spear strike thee.

DAVID.

Never fear of death  
Shall drive me, King, but that my going hence  
May save thy hand yet clean.

JONATHAN.

Friend, all my soul  
Goeth with thee: my love returns not back.

SAUL.

I would he had gone out betwixt your hands,  
Borne to his burial. O miserable !  
His grasp is on thy kingdom, yet thou smilest,  
And callest him soft names ; thou dastard slave !

JONATHAN.

Nay, stay thy hand, O king. For worthier he  
Of empire, seeing he hath hope unhurt,  
Faith in his God, faith in the hearts of men,  
Ambition golden as the morning, skills  
For building or o'erthrowing, with his hand  
Or with deft brain designing ; and his word  
Burns, so that all that hear him, like dry grass,

Become a raging fire ; and in his eyes  
 There is a beauty takes the world with love :  
 Worthier than I to rule, and ampler armed  
 With might, and the strong majesty of kings  
 That wrests obedience from the stubborn will  
 And bows the unyielding neck ; and all the hosts  
 Will follow, and the people through his power  
 Reach the fair utmost of their sovereignty :  
 And him I deem of men abominable,  
 The world's dull obstacle and brute-like foe,  
 Who 'out of mean self-love, or blown conceit,  
 Or dream of duty flattering desire,  
 Snaps at a sceptre or still hugs a throne,  
 To flaunt an idiot governance, where hearts  
 Born lord of his obey. Sweeter to me,  
 To be that great soul's intimate dear friend,  
 Rejoicing in his glory, and beholding  
 The perfect beauty of his deeds, and know  
 Good multiplieth, holpen of his arm.

SAUL,

Aha, aha ! I see it. Ye twain compact

For my untimely ruin. 'Tis for this  
Thou feignest fine humility, more mean  
Than any craven dog. Now, by my soul,  
Thou diest, Jonathan.

ABNER.

Drop thou thy spear!

O King, his heart is pure as Abana,  
And tenderer than the doves . . . Friends, where-  
fore tarry,  
Seeing the King is hurt, and ye but drive  
A keen thorn deeper fingering its edge?

[*The people disperse.*]

SAUL.

Abner.

ABNER.

My lord.

SAUL.

Follow them, Abner : see  
Thou keep close watch upon them : in the night  
They plot my death : yea, they will steal my crown,  
And set it on his brows. [ABNER goes.] Aha, aha,

They feel his foot upon their bended necks,  
And cry "the King, the King!" I am betrayed,  
Casting my chance of glory in his lap,  
And should have kept, and conquered mine own self.  
Mine arm hung at my side—for all Thy ways  
Are crafty, and cruel is Thy smile of hate !  
I gave him chance of victory ; I gave him  
Likewise the risk of death. I loved the lad,  
Restrained his hot ambition at the first,  
Then yielded, hoping good, yet sad to dream  
He leapt upon his ruin. Mine the ruin,  
Mine, mine. I read my doom in his strong eyes  
And all his loathsome beauty, and the lust  
Of his great heart, and faith unconquerable . . .  
Thou full-fed favourite of thy God, made rich  
With gifts above all kind, on every side  
Shall evil compass thee ; thy lust of praise  
Shall dig a pit for thee ; sorrow shall suck  
Thy young heart's blood, and leave it lean and dry ;  
And hope forsake thee ; and thy baffled life  
Shall stand for witness in this people's gaze  
That I am King, and fire is in my palms.

SCENE II.

*Ramah. Within the tent of SAMUEL.*

SAMUEL, *lying in fitful sleep.* NATHAN and GAD.

NATHAN.

AND this sleep too will pass in little time ;  
He will not die before the dawn-wind blows.

GAD.

How shrunken are the iron-corded arms,  
How lank the face, and fallen !

NATHAN.

I have known  
The pent mind, loosened at the last, outbreak  
Like a tempestuous sunset. See, he turns  
Hither his great wide eyes, and moves the lips  
To speak. Go lightly, brother, to his side.

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SAMUEL.

Gad !

GAD.

Lo, thy servant hearkeneth for thy hests.

SAMUEL.

To-morrow get thee down into the fields,  
And follow David to the wilderness :  
Bide with him, till this trouble is o'erpast.  
Nathan !

NATHAN.

My master ?

SAMUEL.

Let thine eyes be bent  
Toward the Chosen, till a day hath come  
Wherein thy power shall guide . . . I am strong  
to-night.  
Upraise me ; set my face toward the doors.

NATHAN.

Thy face is all afire with life revived,  
Thy sinews newly strung.



## SAMUEL.

Yea, I am strong,

For I have seen a vision in my sleep  
More sweet than any visiting mine eyes  
In the night-season, ever, or with day.  
O never when the body, weak for food,  
Trembled, the thin-worn fortress of the mind,  
And all the mind, soared outward, with faint wings  
Scaling the void, half-lost, and full of fears  
And wonder, venturing the unknown and dim  
Immensity and realms of night and death,  
Hath shape or voice or vision thrilled or swept  
Through it or o'er it shuddering, with such light  
And glory and hope and solace, or such power.  
For lo ! the earth upheaved her bounteous breast  
Before me, and I saw from end to end  
Her seas and isles and rolling continents,  
Numberless, glimmering in the moon or sun :  
And on the seas were sails, white, blue, and red,  
Set high one over one on toppling masts,  
Or swallow-winged, or puffing with the wind,  
Billowy, or curved like the snow-bosomed doves :

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And at the city-gates innumerable,  
By cape, or misty mountain, or by bays  
Blue-rolling, or in hollows of the vale,  
Or starlike sprinkled o'er the level field,  
Stood horses, chariots, warriors in array,  
Bowmen and spearmen, whether dusk of face,  
Black-eyed, black-bearded, or with hair of gold  
Flooding fair necks, tall giant-shouldered men  
Or lithe and sinewy, calm or passion-filled  
With sunlight and sweet air, vehement hosts  
Various, prepared for battle with their foes :  
And in the cities stood, with lifted tool,  
Hammer or axe or saw, artificers  
Brawny and shaggy-breasted, in the heat  
Sweating, or singing in the rain and storm,  
And girt with blocks of marble, porphyry,  
Granite or lime, the riven mountains' ribs,  
Trunks of the forest cedars, oak and pine,  
For building or adorning wondrous domes :  
And by the brook-side, or the mountain lone,  
Or sea-beach pine-woods, couched or wandering,  
I saw the large-eyed poets of the lands,

And through the tent-doors and the lattices  
The limner bent to colour his sweet dreams,  
The carver breathing human the dead stone,  
And many a skilled musician with his lute :  
And there were priests in long processions moving,  
Gold-clad, or white, or black, through many a street,  
Or path beside the rivers: and afar,  
Behold the unpeopled bounteous wildernesses  
Girt by seas trackless, stretched below the stars!  
Then rose upon the wind a song, a song  
As of waves thundering or the roar of trees,  
Up from all lands and out of every host,  
Unto Thy praise, O God of Israel !  
And I perceived on every mast of ship  
That sailed the waters hung a pennon out  
Far o'er the breeze, and on it flashed Thy name ;  
And on the banners of the warriors blazed  
Thy name ; and on the temples huge and white  
By river reared, or mountain, or sweet sea,  
Thy name ; and men sailed outward through the  
                  storms,  
Found the strange realms, and there abode and built

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Fanes to Thy glory ; and the thronging priests,  
The poets, and the skilled musicians sang ;  
And all the world, rolled round upon itself,  
Went journeying through the void, for evermore  
Girdled with music, and the song arose  
Eddying and whirling like tempestuous winds,  
Hosannah to the God of Israel !  
And then I bowed my head, and heard a voice  
Cry, Thus hath Israel vanquished the whole earth,  
Not with the sword or with the spear or bow,  
But by the word of One man, and His love !

NATHAN.

Shall these things be, and Israel so fallen ?

GAD.

And thus the hope of Israel fulfilled ?

SAMUEL.

Lift me upon my feet. I hear a voice  
Cry, Samuel, Samuel, Samuel, near and far,

And light doth flood the heaven from end to end !  
Dawn, dawn ! Throw wide the darkening doors,  
and lead

To where I may behold the kindling East.  
Lo, the clouds burn, a rippled crimson sea  
Breaking in golden foam ; the curvèd moon  
Grows wan, and the stars sicken. Lo, afar  
Shoots up a beam all rosy through the realm  
Of golden light, aërial green and blue !  
The sun heaves . . . nay, I see there suns on suns,  
A girdle, and a glory, and a fire ;  
And One, high-seated on a throne of light,  
Faced like the sun at midday ; and His hands  
Shine, and His feet ; and round about Him throng  
Myriads of forms in robes of sunlight flaming . . .  
My Lord, my Lord, I come, I come, to Thee . . .  
He lifts His hand and waves me to His throne,  
Ay, and the spirits stand with arms outspread  
For welcome, and glad faces flamed with love . . .  
Let loose my hands ; my feet are firm to go.

## SCENE III.

*Gibeah. Without the KING's House.*

SAUL.

How will they write, how speak of my vexed years  
Hereafter, when this wrinkled fingers' flesh  
Lies as a little dust in bony palms,  
And earth is in these sockets? Will they say,  
His heart was valiant in unwonted war,  
And though more fierce his pain, and heavier  
The burthen of his curse than oft men bare,  
He sent his sword not home into the sheath,  
Nor swerved from battle; but with steadfast face  
Fronting his torment, to the last dark hour  
Endured? And shall my name upon the lips  
Be spoken reverently, and the voice  
Fall in sad music uttering it; with wail  
Of pity in the throat, and all men meet  
A stumbling-block and marvel in my life?  
For when hath man beneath the palms of wrath

So crushed and shattered lived? or who hath swept  
With helm so broken through a stormier sea?  
He set me ruler o'er a stubborn race,  
And hearts more wayward than the winds, and cried,  
Fashion a kingdom with thy might, and lift  
Thy people high as Ophrah; and with cords  
Kept me from going, and with tightening hand  
Caught at my wrist and held. Nay, who hath loved  
Israel as I? Can ever fall the fruit  
Of promise, and this people sorely crossed,  
Mightiest of tribes arise, and sway the world,  
If evermore He strike them through their kings,  
Thwarting, undoing? Who can rule his house  
Who ruleth not himself, or who obey  
Masters outmastered? and what harder fate  
For nations, than the fettered hand for guide,  
Disputed empire, and the unstable throne?  
And I had skill to see that sudden deeds  
Brought victory, and did not wavering pause  
To wait the will of priests, or hold consult  
With prophets, as whose eyes mine own were clear  
To search the unseen, and firmer far my hand

For deeds befitting men ; and if I deemed  
Now was the time for combat, now for rest,  
Now for rejoicing, and none other hour,  
And this was good to spoil, and that to spare,  
And to enlarge the boundaries was well,  
But that long hate and flesh-devouring war  
Dashed blind the aspiring brain, and stuffed the breast  
With passions of the brute, while with surcease  
Of battle comes the gentler human heart,  
And love of beauty, and the wasted fields  
Put forth their green array ; remained it not  
Supreme to follow large-eyed Reason's rule,  
Nor let days die and thought-awakened impulse  
Fail, while some witch or crafty oracle  
Drew misbegotten omens out of air ?  
Their tyranny above all tyranny  
Toppleth, with terror whelming the duped world,  
Who stand and cry, We know the secret ways  
Of the Ineffable Will, and through our lips  
He speaketh who hath framed the mystic soul ;  
And this and this He sayeth ; and this do,  
Or ye shall crumble in His fires ; and this



Leave undone, and the immeasurable years  
Immeasurable torments shall renew ;  
And hold weak wills and spirits credulous  
For ever bond ; and not alone weak wills  
And spirits credulous, their easier prey,  
But with far deadlier thralldom the clear brain  
And hearts adventurous that read their words  
Mere whimsey, and are strong the void to dare :  
For these the world, made captive with their wiles,  
Casts out in anger, brands with evil names,  
Traduces and despoils ; and thus are lost  
Dear human love, and help, and commune sweet,  
And growth of gathered knowledge, and the hope  
Of truth unwon, and souls the noblest born  
Ruined, and ninefold darkness wraps the earth.  
And the unseen unsearchable dark Will  
Not trampleth them presumptuous, but for him  
Denying, in a world which is not theirs  
But of himself and by him only held,  
Pain ever, and untold perplexity  
Pursueth ; in his mind unlovely shapes  
Marshalling gird him ; and he finds no rest  
Or solace, wandering like a captive beast

Now here, now there, and scaling slippery walls  
To fall and groan ; nor ever wholly frees  
His stomach of that Fear which, as a babe,  
Soured his mother's milk, and day by day  
Nitred his pottage, and made sharp his wine,  
But back it comes assailing, till out-done  
He hankereth the bondage of their help  
And comfort of their lying. He that sails  
Alone beyond the limits of his land,  
And sees blue waves engulf his capes afar,  
Nor recks the wind, attempts a dangerous road,  
And cuts all help away. And me wide wastes  
Surround, far wandering with scorched feet,  
And head sore smitten of the branding sun,  
And throat athirst ; and never face of man  
Cheers, never sign of life except it be  
Its ruin and its fall,—the white bared ribs  
Lifting above the sand, and eyeless brows—  
The wreck of lost lives strewn about the wild.

*ABNER and DOEG approach.*

ABNER.

*Not now : he will not see or hear : go back :*

Let me make bare this evil : for with love  
He heedeth me, and when the mood is passed,  
And all his wrath, now gathering in that calm,  
In passionate utterance dies, and once again  
Storm-stricken Reason, huddled from the blast  
Creeps back into her field, then will I clothe  
This tale about the feet with words like wool,  
That it steal softly to him, in his mind  
Housing itself unfelt.

DOEG.

I will not yield  
My function up to thee. And who art thou  
Would'st counsel kings in their extremity?

ABNER.

I strive not: take thy will: thy counsels hurt,  
Not heal. But thou art stubborn in thy mood,  
And cold as Hermon ; and betwixt us twain  
Nought lives to bind, save that I love my King,  
And thee he hath not hated.

DOEG.

Thou dost well  
 To draw thine anger home, who hast poor skill  
 In parley, being but a soldier. See,  
 He lifteth up his pallid face to heaven,  
 As if new agony now smote his breast.  
 The trance of thought is broken, and the mind  
 Comes back to the hard dungeon of its flesh,  
 That seemed to soar afar. It is the flesh  
 Thwarts him, too narrow for the battling dreams  
 That struggle with their bonds. He is too great  
 And yet too little : ampler minds or less  
 Are bargainers with the body, and compact  
 Union not hard to bear. I've read his woof,  
 Know him, and well can guide. My lord, . .

SAUL.

Aha,  
 Ye are about me, ye are ever near,  
 And all that world behind you, ear and eye,  
 Watching and listening, gaping idiot mouths  
 Row beyond row, illimitable shame !

DOEG.

We are but twain, O King ; this Abner, this  
Doeg thy friend.

SAUL.

I reckon thee well enough.  
Thou hast brute eyes that ever haunt my sight  
Like pain with too much gazing at the sun.  
I would that thou wert dead.

DOEG.

E'en death were dear,  
Yielding thee peace.

SAUL.

I would not thou wert dead.  
Live thy brute life, but live apart . . . And yet  
What solace there? His body that I touch  
Hath never horror like the visioned shapes  
Of the lorn mind.

DOEG.

Yea, even thus, O King.  
Society 's a medicine of the mind

It finds not in itself, and commune close  
Of eye with eye and lip with laughing lip  
Balsam : but for the high intelligence,  
Grave counsel best of all, and calm repose  
Of the bruised spirit on the unhurt will.  
Thou dwellest too much apart. In kindred eyes  
Man reads his lost identity, and learns  
He is as he hath been : but he that scorns  
The fellowship of minds shall find himself  
Linked with an enemy implacable,  
That lays hard hands upon him, plucks his feet  
From going, taunts him, leers into his face,  
Lies on his breast a-nights, laughs in his ears,  
Mounteth upon his shoulders, leans a bulk  
Heavily on his arm to drag him down,  
Nor parteth ever, till it steal away  
Reason and Will, then leaves him lorn and mad.  
For man is not a whole, but framed to fit  
Here as the root, here as the stem, and there  
Blossom or leaf, and only in his place  
Finds goodly life, being little in himself,  
But great in union fair of humankind.

SAUL.

I know thee, Doeg, and thy preludes long  
To terrible revealments. Out with all  
Thy horrible tidings, and thy hated schemes,

DOEG.

He is gone into the hills, and round him drawn  
Many, thy foes. On him the people's hope  
Rests ; yea, he is the chosen king.  
And now thy kingdom is a Sundered bark,  
Sinking in desolate seas.

SAUL.

Traitor !

DOEG.

Nay, King,  
Hear me. I stood at Nob, where now the priests  
Abide, a gathering company, and heard  
The rebel David and Ahimelech,  
High-priest, arch-traitor, commune of thee, King :  
And one said, " He is mad, and knoweth not

H

Which way his hand moves, governing the realm ;”  
And one, “ A godless and rebellious king,  
Who strives with Jahveh for a separate throne.”  
And the High-priest, the lewd Ahimelech,  
Embraced that stripling, calling him the Chosen,  
The God-anointed, clad him with great arms,  
The temple’s votive glory, and sent forth  
With blessings on his way.

SAUL.

Though thou wert false,  
And ne’er till now spake truth, now speakest thou  
Truth blameless. For I know their traitorous ways—  
Planters of lies, priests, prophets, soothsayers,  
Presumptuous, impudent, with lust of rule  
Insatiable, and tyranny unquelled ;  
Mean, for they fright weak women with vain tales,  
To spoil them of their substance, like base thieves  
That threaten with a knife against the throat ;  
And powerful, because they rule the world  
Through woman, man’s first guide, and evermore  
Replenisher of his fears ; and from them grow



Wars, rapine, slaughter, sundering of friends,  
Hates with no pity, ghastly punishments,  
Confusion of the world ; and, with false cries  
Of light, they cover the sad, searching eyes  
With folds of deadly darkness, and restrain  
All glorious valiant cleaving of the deeps  
For knowledge, lest their lie be laughed to scorn ;  
Blasphemers, worse than him that doth deny  
God is, seeing they sell His name for gold  
And empire, boast His inmost confidence,  
And make Him hateful to the nobler mind.  
Therefore I pluck the heart of this corruption  
Out from the roots : for if the blinded fools,  
Strong-armed, weak-hearted, through my kingdom,  
learn

These are against me, they, like stricken sheep,  
Will gather at their calling, and my staff  
Be as a broken reed. Send forth men armed  
Suddenly, that they girdle Nob with swords,  
And fall upon these traitors and their brood,  
Devouring utterly.

ABNER.

Nay, yield not priests  
The vantage ever through deliberate wrong.

SAUL.

Cozeners ! they set them midway 'twixt the king  
And them he rules, with furtive flattery  
Fawning on either power, unwilling slaves  
That cringe for mastery, and, having won,  
Reign tyrannous ; and now, dark-handed, range  
The people against their kings, and now the kings  
Against their people ; first, the sovran arm  
Strengthening, until it grow too strong for them,  
And bend them ; then the people oppressed they  
soothe,  
Cajoling, till they, gaining on their kings  
Hourly, become sole rulers of the realm,  
And kings and priests in one fell ruin o'erthrow,  
And since men blindly take the yoke and bear  
Until it gall, but when it galls, revolt,  
They know their empire propped on sliding sands,  
And whet a sharper eye than all the world.

ABNER.

But never ill thing done but is as spice  
Between their teeth ; yea, they will crave a hurt  
For profit, and their wound is evermore  
Ten thousand champions added to their cause.  
Therefore, O King, deal warily with priests.

SAUL.

Thou'rt overwise, thy over-wisdom folly,  
Thy caution cowardice. What man hath heart  
To do my hests, and lead?

DOEG.

I, even I,  
O King, will hasten, eager for their death,  
Hating their arrogant mouths and cold hard eyes  
Of loveless condemnation. But give ear  
A little moment. Touching this revolt,  
I bring thee tidings miserably true,  
But with them counsel . . .

SAUL.

Out upon thy counsel!

Arms, arms ! up, Abner ! gather all my bands !  
 I will pursue him : I will turn **not back**,  
 Though hell surround me, till this rebel kite  
 Hangs bleaching in the sun, foul rottenness,  
 And all his host lies strewn about the stones.  
 Send hither Jonathan. Why standest thou  
 With mouth struck dumb ?

DOEG.

Dost not command him fetch  
 Jonathan thy son ?

SAUL.

Thou heardest.

DOEG.

Marvel not,  
 He hath bent brows, and cannot thee obey.  
 Him thou shalt find hereafter, where thou findest  
 David thy foe. He hath none faithfuller.

SAUL.

Thou playest with my torture. Did I not

Read rebel in him ? and now this second time  
He sets a rebel sword against my life.

ABNER.

O King, that he thou lovest from thy house  
Is gone into the wilderness, we know,  
But for what end, none recks ; I cannot tell :  
But when the hour of need is sore upon thee,  
I swear none closer to thine arm shall stand  
Than Jonathan thy son. So Abner speaks,  
And knowing nought, takes silence to his lips,  
And followeth thy feet.

SAUL.

But now my soul  
Dies in me, and mine arms are stricken cold.

*A MESSENGER appears.*

Why crawlest thou toward me like a dastard dog  
Shame-smit for disobedience ? Rise, approach :  
I will not slay *thee* for thy ghastly tale,  
But them that cause that sorrow in thine eyes.

VOICES *afar*.

The darkness of death hath shadowed us,  
Black night, and the grave.

MESSENGER.

O King, I know not with what words to clothe  
Truth that is all one horror. Never yet  
Hath evil with so many hands assailed  
Israel, or in an hour so weak. For he  
Who was thy friend and firm prop of thy throne,  
David, whom thou dost ever, in vain, pursue,  
Arms ; and a crowd, not worst of all thy host,  
Girds him ; and one by one thy noblest men  
Drop off, and stray away ; and while thy realm  
Breaks open in the midst, and falls a-twain,  
Hosts gather on thy borders, west and south,  
The Philistine, a wave storm-blown and fierce,  
And Amalek, new-risen, fierce and firm ;  
While now a rumour fraught with tenfold woe  
Runneth from ear to ear about the land,  
Vague, strange, but darkening all men with its wings.

SAUL.

Enough : I thank thee for thy strokes well-dealt  
A life that fails even as my kingdom fails . . .

WARRIORS *and* PEOPLE *throng about him.*

Aha, aha ! ay, ay ! lift ever hands  
To me reproachful ! I am not your God.  
I cursed you not with life, nor compassed you  
With failure. Up to Him, and reason crave  
Why ye are hungered, why dark death, disease,  
Anguish and fear afflict you ! He it was  
Who, with fair promises of bliss, enticed  
Your fathers out of Egypt. Forty years  
He led them through hot sands and herbless wastes,  
With ruinous horrible temptations proved,  
Betrayed, and trampled. Did they find, poor souls,  
Their land of longing ? Weakly children, born  
Of wailing mothers starved in tracts of drought,  
With stroke on stroke beat out a gory path  
Across the rocks and fires ; and found at last  
A little streak of barren thorny field,  
'Twixt desert sea and desert sand, upheaved

Among grey hills, and watered with faint streams  
Now sucked away with summer, and now swollen  
With ruin of their toil, and girdled hard  
With foes on all sides round, brave, terrible,  
In arms more skilled, in union more compact,  
To foil their purpose, waste them, spoil, and slay.  
And you this little vexed inheritance  
Behold he lendeth, with its swarm of ills !  
Why do ye open fearful eyes at me,  
Why curse me for your griefs, who bear more grief  
A thousandfold, long grieving for you all,  
And impotent to help ? Ha ! ask of Him,  
Or ask His prophets, or His priests, His priests,  
Who know His heart, why I, a stricken soul,  
Sick, purblind, mad, am set to rule your lives,  
And He to cross me ruling ? . . . Nay, but hear,  
False friends and all-ungrateful : have not I  
Led you to many battles, many years,  
And lifted you far higher among peoples  
Than judge or prophet ? And though now your foes  
Threaten, why shrink ye ? Have I shrunk for fear ?  
Not though foes deadlier thwart me, and my doom



Gather's about me, and my children's love  
Is torn from me, and all my heart laid low.

ISRAELITES.

See, see ! what awful prodigy hath spread  
Its hands athwart the fields ? Look up, look up !  
Behold the sun is shrivelling in his might . . .  
Narrower, narrower, even as with the weeks  
Vanishes the moon ! O, night as dark as death  
Snatches the hills away : the whole black heaven,  
Lampless, reels round, and all the stricken earth  
Reels, and clouds thicken. Run ye ; hide your heads ;  
Seek ye the caves ; seek ye the hollow trunks  
Of the old olives ; cover you with leaves ;  
Bow down, lay close your faces to the clay ;  
Cry, that He spare.

SAUL.

Fools, in a little time  
The untroubled orb will open his hid eye  
As from an eyelid.

VOICES *afar*.

Woe, woe, desolate, desolate,  
Without guide, without help,  
All hope in ashes,  
Our one friend gone to his grave.

SAUL.

Ye read Him not as I. His ways are fixed  
Changeless. Nought is that hath not been, and  
shall be.

As morning and as evening, as the rains  
Seasonable, as the vines put forth their shoots,  
As the new green o'erlays the cedar's black,  
So wheels the cycle of His laboured schemes  
Over and over—lord of all beside,  
To His own system slave.

ISRAELITES.

O, never yet  
Portent or sign in heaven, save it yield  
Death, and forerun unfelt calamity.  
Surely innumerable woes for thee,

O Israel, this darkness of the earth  
Heralds.

SAUL.

Who cometh here adust and white  
With hasty travel? Speak!

MESSENGER.

Samuel is dead!

SAUL.

Hence, nightmare form!...His voice cleaves through  
and through;  
I hear no word; but in my breast is thrust  
Something more sharp than any foeman's spear.

MESSENGER.

The voice of all thy people followed me,  
Mourning, a wave of lamentation. List,  
It grows upon the air.

SAUL.

Abner, O Abner!

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ABNER.

My King, thy face is as the sunless East :  
Thou quiverest like the grasses.

SAUL.

Abner, Abner,  
Cleave close to me. Let arm of any friend  
Stay me a little. I am as a man  
Drowning, dim noises in mine ears, the light  
Glimmering away.

ABNER.

Room, that I lead the King  
Back to his home. The King hath no more power  
Himself to lead, being blinder than the blind,  
And footless as the lame.

ISRAELITES.

Help : go ye on :  
God hath undone him, and his rebel hands  
Broken. Alas for him to whom we clave,  
Loving him, once our glory ! And alas for thee,

Alas for thee whom darkness covereth,  
And royal robes of death,  
Samuel, O Samuel, O father, O our lord,  
Whose stern and strange authority,  
And thunder of thy word  
Feared we, yet found thy care to be  
More tender than the touch of maidens' hands,  
And sweet thine eyes and kind,  
And wiser thou than all the elders of all lands  
Worn lean with life-long labour of the mind !  
Ah, surely bitterly we sinned who strove  
Against thy laws and love,  
Warring on God in wrestling with thy sway,  
And thirsted for the pomp and gleam  
And purple glory of a dream,  
And bartered for a throne of clay  
The Eternal Majesty unseen whom sun and moon  
array !  
But ever alas, alas, O Israel,  
For thee who stumblest on thy treeless heights,  
Shelterless, with faint feet,  
And ever the ways widen, and thy lights

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Fail, and thy woe no poet's mouth may tell,  
Woe folded in the palms of thy dead years,  
Woe gathering black around thee with new fears ;  
Thou in whose ear so sweet  
They sang of old time of thy days  
Thereafter, which have dawned not, nor shall dawn  
Ever for thee with any shaft of fire,  
Limitless light,  
Nor birth of bliss be thine, nor manly might,  
Nor reverence, honour of men, nor genial praise,  
Most miserable of all tribes, who didst aspire  
Highest, and lowest crawlest in thy ways !

## ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Among the ruins of Ziklag.*

DAVID.

THOU wilt not leave one inmost place of sorrow  
Untrodden of my feet . . . O bitter wreck  
Of my lost glory won with many a wound !  
Here stood my council-chamber, here my palms  
Whispered in blue air o'er the myrtle-beds,  
And here my cypresses, a sombre troop,  
Swayed, while I paced the sweet brown paths by  
night,  
And reared ærial realms. And here would come  
Ahinoam my spouse, and coil white arms  
Lustrous around my neck ; or Abigail  
Commune fair counsel—glorious womanhood  
With grace of wisdom crowned. And solace good  
They bore me, nor a weak uxorious brow  
Bent I to them, but, man-like, of their hearts

Drank homage with deep love, and in them found  
Companionship, and help, and dear delight  
Of beauty, and the tender breath of God.  
For he that spurneth woman's love, and warmth  
Of winding arms, and splendour of her breast,  
Plucks out the heart of being, and from Him  
Who planned this passionate frame, revolts, and  
sucks  
Poison, and shrivels up an empty soul,  
And reaps the wounds and wrath of wronged law.  
Such gain with them, such loss with Michal lost,  
Michal, through whose strong love the stricken King,  
With evil counsel fired, my ruin hoped—  
Insatiable her love, insatiable  
Her appetite of glory—with hard hate  
Torn from me, passionate bride adorable.  
All ways of sorrow must my driven feet  
Visit, O Father! Pangs of the desolate heart  
Were mine, and shame, and stings of general scorn.  
Hunger, and pangs among the leafless hills,  
I Thine Anointed with the Anointed King  
At war, unwilling, hurled from high estate



And worshipful command. And oftentimes Death  
Has breathed across my brow, or in fierce pain  
I have cried to him far off, and fain had crost  
The dark gulf to his shores of night and sleep.  
And oftentimes fear assailed me, and the pricks  
Of desperate doubt, and rebel discontent.  
For what more bitter to the climbing soul  
Than long delay of glory, and the heights  
Of sovereignty still towering as it scales,  
The little journey made, the vast to make,  
And fruitless harvest of the hurrying years?  
But ever of Thy great love and careful sway  
Sorrow revealed, the rescue alway sure,  
The larger bliss awaiting at the bourne,  
Guerdon of little griefs. And what is man  
That he should murmur, seeing that his pain  
Cements the mystic framework of Thy worlds,  
Thy purpose helps fulfil? And I large gains  
Have gathered,—inspiration of sweet song,  
Knowledge of men, knowledge of earth and sea,  
And of mine inmost heart that mirroreth  
All human dreams, and of Thy ways and will;

And now am strong to conquer and to sway,  
 A lord of various lives. So dost Thou make  
 Evil Thy servant, and the rebel sword  
 Weapon of righteousness, out of corruption  
 Cause beauty excellent, and sin herself  
 Conspire for virtue's ends. Thus though to-day  
 Pangs keen as death assail me, I arise,  
 And ever where the shadow of Thy hand  
 Points, will I follow, till mine enemies  
 Are ground beneath my feet; and glory build  
 On glory; and, the spoiler spoiled, return;  
 And here, while Saul defends a ruined realm,  
 Await the last dread wound that is my weal.

## SCENE II.

*On the slopes of Mount Gilboa. Within the KING'S*

*Tent. Night.*

SAUL *and* ABNER.

SAUL.

Look thou upon my face, and say what signs  
 Of reason or of calm are in mine eyes.

All my dark world is peopled with thick shapes  
Horrible, and I know not whether these  
Be not more real than the things my hand  
Toucheth, and that we deem the durable earth  
More insubstantial than the eddying air.

ABNER.

Thou art more lusty in thy gathering years  
Than any youth now sleepless with the hope  
Of unexperienced war.

SAUL.

It might be death  
Has drawn me hither, coming with light feet  
In the night-season ; it might be the end  
Passed, smothered up in sleep, and in thick drowse  
I have glided from that other far-off world  
To this more vague and fearful . . . Loose my limbs !  
O let me back into the old sad ways !

ABNER.

Surely dark death were sweet for one whose days  
Roll in these gulfs of fire.

SAUL.

O clasp mine arms,  
 Abner ; O pass thy palm athwart my brows ;  
 Smooth back my hair that burns me ; smile upon me ;  
 Talk lightly ; tell me I am Saul, thy King,  
 Thou Abner, my one friend, this deadly pit  
 My royal tent ; that round about me sleep  
 My warriors, my tried familiar bands ;  
 That we shall fight the leaguéd Philistine  
 To-morrow ; and the old green earth will laugh  
 Ere many hours in the dear natural dawn . . .

ABNER.

My King !

SAUL.

Lonely I tempted the dim road  
 Through many days, far journeying, till all light  
 Passed ; then unnumbered devious ways  
 Perplexed my feeling footsteps ; then thick sand  
 Shifting : and never voice, nor ever beam  
 Of any star, for help. I stretched faint arms

And cried, out-wandering in a shoreless world,  
Desolate, desolate. 'Tis a fearful thing  
To tempt the mind's lone wilderness. Never  
Sweet confidence in sun or moon or earth,  
The child's glad heart, returns ; nor tender dreams  
From mother drawn or sister ; nor the strong  
Calm certainty and fixed belief that breed  
Action ; nor faith in man, whose fruit is love,  
Firm fellowship, and might of helping hands.

ABNER.

Thought is poor medicine for thought-wounded minds,  
And pain remembered is as pain new-born :  
So dwells he ever with his life's dark foes.

SAUL.

I stagger in my night : I find no bourne  
For all my seeking : question put receives  
Question for answer, and each guiding thread  
Fourfold divides.

ABNER.

O, let me lead thy mind  
To healing dreams !

SAUL.

I am broken, I am broken !  
Let them laugh loud their triumph ! Lo, I stood  
Stronger than they : then fell His curse : my heart  
Still braved all arms. But now hath hope gone down,  
Gulfed in thick cloud ; and courage, with eclipse  
Of light, sickens and dies.—See you, look there !

ABNER.

I reckon not anything—only the night.

SAUL.

Methought I saw a weird shape drifting by  
Muffled in blackness, and its lifted arm,  
Beckoning, waved to me a withered palm !  
They throng innumerable, as though the tombs  
Vomited forth their spoil . . . Dost thou not hear  
The sound of chariots from the valley ? Lo,

They gather hour by hour. I tell thee, Abner,  
It will go hard with us, this last dread fight.

ABNER.

But victory for crown, victory, O King !

SAUL.

Dost thou believe it? O what fear is this !  
All power of resolve is past : my soul  
Shivers in me. Why tremble thus my limbs,  
And my teeth gnash together? Did he not  
Prophesy I should die in shame, a slave,  
Defeated and undone? And all their words,  
Like purpose of a manly mind, unfold  
A perfect form. Sit by, and speak to me  
Of little things ; the anemones that plume  
Dry clods upturned about old olive-roots ;  
The blood-red, gorgeous, glossy tulip-cups,  
Each with its tear of dew ; the green soft grass  
Betwixt the shadowing crags—O, anything  
That knows not thought, or fear, or fantasy,  
The torture of the mind, the pricks of care !

ABNER.

O, rather counsel of to-morrow's strife,  
Seeing thou bearest on thy sword, O King,  
The weal of all thy people sorrowing,  
And all the hope and help of Israel.

SAUL.

Ay, ay, mock on my madness! See these hands,  
Are they not withered? Lo, these arms that once  
Could rend an oak!—lean, shrivelled to the bone!  
My knees bow under me; my ankle-joints  
Fail with my body's burthen. What am I  
That I should prate to thee of wars, or lead  
Kingdom 'gainst kingdom? . . What a wall is this  
To gird men from their foes!

ABNER.

O, when the battle  
Roars round thee, all thy might will come again,  
And none more deadly range the perilous field.

SAUL.

For days I followed him, the rebel slave,



About the grey hot hills, a jealous King  
Baffled, befooled. Gone is the ancient pride,  
Father of valiance. Liever would I seek  
Some hollow of the mountain, and there pine,  
Like a sick beast, my piteous days to nought.  
When him, my strong right hand, wise counsellor,  
And maker of my glory in old days,  
The deep night swallowed from my vexèd eyes  
For ever, and I turned to left, and cried,  
"Samuel," and never voice, and then to right,  
And "Samuel, Samuel," cried with pleading tears,  
And no voice followed ; and I thought of death,  
How it divideth soul from soul, and snaps  
All bonds, and never love can pass its seas  
To heal the heart gone broken hence and wronged,  
Nor late repentance for a wound misdealt,  
Nor late remorse that links the rifted lives ;  
And what might be his agony in the deeps,  
Who was my friend ; and how the great dark Will  
Had frozen hard the anger in his eyes ;  
And how his curse worked hourly, and his words  
Each year fulfilled ; then brake my battling arm,

And with confused wild strokes I strove with air . . .  
I am blind, I am blind, and lost, and miserable,  
Friendless, mistrusted of my people, driven  
From trouble unto trouble. O that one  
Of all His prophets, priests, or sooth-sayers,  
Might come, my deeds forgiven, and one hour  
Counsel of life and death, and in my heart  
Pour all the gathered treasure of long thought  
The wise have laid together ! Ah, meseems  
They know whate'er man may, and one late born  
Searching alone, attempts a boundless realm.  
And better far to lay the aching head  
Upon their breasts who stand 'twixt God and men,  
And drink sweet solace of their counsel kind,  
Child-like, child-hearted, all-believing, meek,  
Than arm against the world, and find no friend  
In sorrow, face to face with pitiless wrath !

## ABNER.

It is an ill thing ever from the world  
To wander, and against the major part  
Take arms defying.

SAUL.

Might I speak an hour

With one of these, e'en though my soul, yet proud,  
Disdain obedience, and the time's too late  
To woo old dreams again, it yet might be  
My mind would lull in sweeter calm, and thought  
In cool and temperate air, strong-winged, arise  
And soar to happier heights . . . Go forth, and fetch  
Their wisest from the camp . . . O what am I  
That I should flout the hearts and brains of men,  
And set my reason highest? Lone and mad,  
Self-severed from the ways of all the world,  
All nutriment of healthful fellowship  
Dried from the roots, I dwindle in my pride,  
Confuse fair wisdom's gold with folly's brass,  
With daz'd idiot-eyes read truth awry,  
To mine own purpose false, with grief on grief,  
In random wrath, afflict the innocent breast,  
And, like a drunkard lunging at his foes,  
Strike cold the best beloved. O that a sleep  
Might drown my senses deep as midmost seas,  
Beyond all paths of dreams or power of dawn !

## SCENE III.

*Gilboa. A lonely place.*

JONATHAN.

THEY sleep, my well-beloved : e'en fear of death  
Night's vials drug away. But not for me  
Sleep or oblivion, on whose heart a care  
Stronger than night sits, dreaming of the dawn.  
For what shall be when yonder hosts arise ?  
This little mount of sand, our kingdom frail,  
Reared with weak hands on a tempestuous shore,  
What wind-blown wave can hurl back to its sea ?  
I count the tents on either side, compare  
Legion and legion with a soldier's eye.  
Theirs is the reined elation which is might,  
The hand well-trained, the strong will tractable  
Held with the firm grip of a master firm,  
Filled with one purpose, facing just the deed  
To do, and nought beyond ; and ours the heart  
Distrustful of its rulers, nor yet skilled

Itself to rule, despairful energy,  
And aim all undefined, and he that leads  
Thought-palsied, reckless, stayed of wavering doubt  
From reasonable action, passion-driven  
To acts unreasonable, and ruinous hurt.  
Thus I forefeel the bitter shameful end,  
Our house upheaved, and Israel forlorn.  
O loveless lives of men, triumphant wrong !  
When shall hate sleep, wrath die, mad rivalry,  
Bloody ambition, and the snow-white hands  
Of love and wisdom sway ? How easily found  
The fairest world that ever poet sang,  
Could heart help brain, brain leave heart incorrupt,  
And men unite for universal weal !  
Then should the strong not flaunt the mightier arm,  
Still of their power replenishing the weak :  
Then should the weak not rail against the strong,  
But joy in gazing at their grace of strength :  
Then should the rich of their superfluous store  
Make prosperous poor lives, and poor men love them,  
Not grudge their goodlier height, and with hot hate  
Toil for their overthrow : nor bloat success

**Leer** with brute eyes at failure nobler far :  
Nor mean lives plot for envious promotion,  
Outwitting honest foes ; but all men lift  
The worthiest and the wisest, well-content  
To serve where to obey is general good :  
Then should wars lapse, and never people strive  
For utmost empire, but, old wrongs forgot,  
Nation with nation labouring lead the world  
In union up to altitudes divine.  
Ay me, if these weak limbs and languid will  
Survive the morrow, and the sceptre pass  
In aftertime to me, my thought, my speech,  
All sweet persuasion, prayer, kingly example,  
Authority and power, to this one end,  
Forgetful what faint skill of arms was mine,  
Shall work, none other—that the sword be broken,  
And built the thrones of reason and of love.  
Yea, and though never mine the land, but his,  
My friend beloved now suffering wound on wound,  
Bliss were it, e'en the lowest in his house,  
For such result to toil. And what though came  
No thanks or praise of men, but rather scorn,

Derision, poverty, life isolate,  
Might not some costlier crown await beyond,  
And this, the faint beginning of a life,  
Afar unfold? . . lo there the grim abyss  
That stays the venturous foot! . . . But soft! what form  
Looms toward me? Is it not the sleepless King  
Walking the night, all helpless at the helm?  
Alas for hurt minds in their loneliness!

SAUL.

The glad sweet mountain air makes cool my blood,  
And purpose firm with bracing of the limbs,  
And I grow valiant with a hope renewed,  
To shake this tyranny off. As one in sleep  
Feels death weigh on his heart, and, half-o'erthrown,  
Half-conscious, wills, and with one resolute wrench  
Breaks from his drowse, and 'scapes the imminent  
doom,

So seize I first revival of the soul  
And body's health, and rise, and break for ever  
The thralldom of a vain credulity,  
And lift myself supreme above all fears,

All fantasy and make-believes of mind  
 The sick brain breeds more fast than death the worm.  
 I would that overthrow of will, heart, sense,  
 Mind's empire won with many a fear and pain,  
 Were blotted from all record of my life,  
 So none might ever point a warning hand  
 To fright weak souls, saying, " Behold our faith  
 He scarred with fierce reiterated strokes,  
 But at the last, before the frown of death,  
 Swerved, and repented, and retracted all,  
 And lapt him in our garment-folds, a babe !"  
 Nay, thus I tread to dust their idiot dreams,  
 And with invigorate purpose face the doom.—  
 Stay, speak, reveal !

JONATHAN.

My father !

SAUL.

O my son,  
 Why dost thou tempt the gloom, nor find sweet rest?  
 Come close to me. Place both thy palms in mine.



Did not one say that I should find thee true,  
No rebel? . . . Ay, 'twas but a mocking dream,  
Not the clear reason's vision. O forgive  
My wrongs, remembering with what fell foes  
This poor vexed brain through days and maddening  
    nights  
Struggled alone. Nay, speak not, lest old pain  
Come with dark hand to undermine my tower  
Of purpose new-upreared. The hour draws nigh  
When I must lead my people to this fight.  
I have resources deep. Farewell, farewell.

JONATHAN.

Now sits cold resolution in his breast  
Worse than all passion's ecstasy. Farewell!  
I see thee moving darkly in dark ways,  
Magnificent in glory, and in ruin  
Magnificent, King to the utmost hour!  
And lo, the dawn-wind breathes, and in the east  
Dim lines of light proclaim the perilous day.

## ACT V.

SCENE I. *At Shunem.*ACHISH *and* PHILISTINES.

WARRIORS, my glory and my steadfast arm,  
Firm fellowship of free and venturous lives,  
Confederacy of giants, ye whose ears  
Drink in the great sea's thunder on the reefs,  
Who roam the innumerable water-vales,  
And cleave the winds in winter ; toilers, ye  
Whose brown and brawny hands and branded arms  
Have robed with harvest many a seaward waste,  
Twining green vine-tree tendrils, and with axe  
And mattock delving round the olive-roots  
For nurture ; ye who eye the golden rind  
Starlike among thick, prattling lemon-leaves,  
And almond-bloom and peach around your homes  
Scent in the spring ; whose fields are green with corn  
Or yellow with the crocus or the flax ;  
You to this mountain, through rough ways and fierce,

Betwixt the blue hills and the glimmering sea,  
By Carmel and well-watered Esdraelon,  
With mirthful music of harmonious feet,  
And songs of battle have I led, and now  
Conduct to glorious triumph, and the crown  
Awaiting valiant labour. Who are they  
With whom my banded thousands on these hills  
Shall battle? See, Gilboa, where they pitch,  
Holds out their tents—a thin and wasted flock  
Exposed on either flank, an easy prey!  
For he, their shepherd, with his gods at war,  
Blinded with madness, sulks away his hours  
Forgetful; vexed, hath lost the guiding hand,  
Glory of generals, and flings his fold  
Like a spent garment reckless from his heights,  
To lie what way it fall. And part to him  
Cleave of a nation rent with civic wrath,  
And part to David hungering for his throne,  
Nor one hath heart for fight. For where the host  
That draweth not its courage from the soul  
Of him that leads? From him the eager joy,  
Glad appetite of strife, the billowy charge

And whirlwind of the battle. Born of him  
The valorous ecstasy, and from the gods  
Exhaustless sap and sinew of the limbs.  
And you a joyous general leads, and they  
Replenish. For the gods ye serve, O friends,  
Live ; yea, they journey daily from the deeps,  
Or nightly, traversing the populous heaven,  
Or dwell in mystic image in your shrines ;  
And influence mild or rage of them ye feel,  
Smit by their beams, or oft their voices hear  
Along the clamorous beaches, ominous ;  
Of them the languor of soft love, of them  
Passion and strength ; they grape, and olive-fruit,  
Palm-nuts, and pomegranate, and peach, and fig,  
The honey, and the milk, and wine, and oil  
Feed from their liberal veins ; and you their warmth  
Kindles with life, their light is more than wine.  
But these their priests in tenfold darkness roll,  
And bind them with hard burthens ; for they teach  
A god unknown, unfelt, that hath no name,  
And break the graven image, which for men  
Purblind is guide and solace in dark hours,

Reminder of the far-off majesties,  
And all their mind reveals ; and thus perplex  
And grieve the ductile heart of ignorance  
With shadows thinner than a spider's wing,  
And cow the courage of the godward breast.  
How can ye trust that which ye have not seen,  
And dare not image ? Lo, the wily tribes  
Who snarl at swine and serve an unseen god !  
To-day let prophet, priest, and viewless lord  
Sustain them ! Ours the stronger hand and will,  
Straight stroke, not craft and craven crookedness,  
And ours the victory of valiant hearts.

PHILISTINES.

O brand newly burnished,  
O bow strung for battle,  
There is wine for you a-weary  
And worn with long waiting ;  
Ye shall drink blood-draughts  
In the day's hot spaces,  
Your lips ye shall lave  
In the life's sweet rivers,

And revel in the rushing  
 Of red soft streams !  
 Thrust sure, O sword,  
 And, O spear, the winds cleave,  
 For your thirst is our thirst,  
 And your triumph our slaking,  
 Till you've feasted you and filled you  
 With the foe's red flight,  
 And we wreath you with the roses,  
 And array you with the lilies !

SCENE II.

*The field of Gilboa.*

SAUL *wounded.* *The KING'S ARMOUR-BEARER.*

SAUL.

I HAVE sought life triumphant ; failed, and sought  
 Death, valiant death. Their arrows pierced me  
 through,  
 Their sword struck well, their spear hath wasted me :

But I will enter open-eyed death's gates,  
Not reeling blindfold with the rage of war.

ARMOUR-BEARER.

I pray thee let me bind these bleeding streams ;  
And here is wine to drink, a scanty draught . .  
Nay, take it to thy lips.

SAUL.

Trouble me not . . .  
There is but one thing in the life of man  
To fear, and so but one to brave—life's ending :  
'Tis meet we write not coward on our tombs,  
Failing this first last fight. ' .

ARMOUR-BEARER.

Hear thou my prayer,  
O King !

SAUL.

To what end should I drink thy wine ?

ARMOUR-BEARER.

Alack, to keep life whole.

SAUL.

Hast thou not seen  
 My sons' fair bodies lie, cold rottenness,  
 Upon yon luckless field ? Hast thou not seen  
 My kingdom torn from me, dishonour, shame,  
 Scorn of mean foes spirted upon my face,  
 All love and worship of my brother men,  
 Life's one dear boon, withdrawn ? . . . Friend, rid  
                   thy soul  
 Of the fear of death, which alway through thy years  
 Makes sour life's sweets, and darkens every dream,  
 And stands at pleasure's door, and from thy cup  
 Strikes thy lips dull when mirth is at its best,  
 And palsies every foot that treads the void  
 To search the truths unknown.

ARMOUR-BEARER.

I fear it not.



SAUL.

Then, lift thy sword, and strike me through the  
breast,

For life sits ill at ease in ruined homes.

Why dost thou shrink away?

ARMOUR-BEARER.

My lord, I dare not.

SAUL.

Craven! thou darest not! . . Why thy dismal tears?

ARMOUR-BEARER.

I cannot slay my God's Anointed King.

SAUL.

For why?

ARMOUR-BEARER.

Lest some great evil fall upon me.

## SAUL.

Fool ! for the worst that can be is but death,  
And death thou dost not fear ! And what is he  
Thou callest thy God's Anointed ? Where my crown,  
My kingdom, where my free authority,  
Whose faithfullest will bow not to my will,  
Nor heed my humblest prayer ? Go, get thee hence  
Up to the heights, and watch, and bring me word  
How fares it with the remnant of my band.—  
. . If they should come upon me in my pangs,  
And take me home in triumph, and their shouts  
Ring in my dying ears ! or with rare skill  
Pour oil upon my life, and hold me bound  
Through lingering years of shame and littleness,  
And I should see that other on my throne,  
A prosperous lord, and I, the first of kings,  
Go to the worms a slave ! . . They shall not say  
My soul was overthrown, or ever will  
My will subdued, but, master of myself,  
To myself alone I bowed. . . For valiant ends  
Shall man shed kindred blood, and not his own ?  
Life is a little gift, and little worth,

For which light thanks to That which gives and  
takes—

A dim rough road from nought to nought, with mist  
And storm and fleeting sunbeam darked or dazed,  
Trode with faint feet that stumble to their goal,  
Nor e'er revert ; nor knowledge of what was  
Yields, nor of what beyond the walls of night,  
Nor any certainty of that which is ;  
But glimpses that bemock the moving eyes,  
And pleasures dead at birth, and hopes that scale  
To be back-beaten to the shameful flats ;  
And loss of friends, and ruining of love,  
And purpose purposeless, and aimless longing,  
And griefs, and inextinguishable fear :  
Being mine, the giver naming not his name,  
Nor making known his form or countenance,  
I use it as I will, and with a stroke  
Sunder these clayey bonds.—Thou glittering elf,  
Who hast made mothers childless, and with groans  
Rent the lorn breast, keen-spoiler, faithful friend,  
To-day I put thee to thy tenderest use ! . .  
To think a little pang all pangs may end,  
One thrust o'erthrow this turbulent vexed earth

With all its federate and disrupted powers,  
Lame pacts and interneciary feuds,  
And that which speaks, thinks, agonizes here,  
Lie uncomplaining rubbish, and distil  
Sup for the thirsty clods ! And what beyond ?  
Nay, who hath seen ? and of the unseen realm  
There comes no dream but what minds masterless  
Confuse of things that throng this side the veil.  
Scatter the pacted elements : what then ?  
How shall old thoughts revisit senses changed,  
How conscience bide in disunited dust  
Fine-sifting in the winds ? . . To be a part  
Of all things, breathing balm from flowery fields,  
Twined with the vine-sprays round their kindred  
          elms,  
Replenishing the gold on airy wings,  
Or lending scarlet to the tender flax  
In summer, freshness to green grass for lips  
Of browsing kine, or in the sun's clear breath  
Life-giving light diffused, were destiny  
Not ill, though mind endured to know its change . . .  
Nor ill, though mind endure not, now to me,

Pain-stricken through all senses; rather sweet  
As loving hands laid on a burning brow . . .  
And if it be that worse remains, and torture  
More manifold than life or dreams confused  
In feverous nights e'er wrought, and ne'er an end,  
I 'scape no pang by tarrying, but disarm  
Dark fate, undaunted, leaping at my foe.

ARMOUR-BEARER (*returning*).

Better thus dead. Thou would'st not brook thy  
shame,  
And ruin of thy people: nor will I,  
This memory of thee . . . thus, to thy goal!

AMALEKITE WANDERER.

Round the rough mountain strawn with desperate  
death,  
I've roamed from end to end, and many slain  
Beheld, but never sight so strange as this—  
Two wounded men by their own weapons quelled,  
And one, the King!

SAUL.

Shall never power of will  
Prevail to end this agony of days ?  
And must the hated life return, and bear  
Its tasteless offerings to the sick sad soul ?  
What man art thou ?

AMALEKITE.

Surely thy friend, O King !

SAUL.

If thou hast pity, draw thou near and pierce  
My bosom with thy sword. Here, where the life  
Lies crouching in my heart. Strike deep and firm,  
For I am hard to slay. Strike, that Saul drink  
Oblivion, and be nothing but a name  
Upon the perishable lips of men !

SCENE III.

*Ziklag.*

DAVID, JOAB, ABISHAI, ASAHAI, ABIATHAR, GAD,  
ABIGAIL, AHINOAM, ISRAELITE FOLLOWERS.

DAVID.

THE billows of deep woe have covered us,  
All griefs are swallowed in this gulf of pain.

ISRAELITES.

O our lost glory, O our King !  
O vision of dark death ! O beauty's blight !  
O love that, like one drowning, spreads weak hands,  
And finds not what it seeketh ! O dread night  
Up-scaling through black clouds from poisonous  
lands,  
On hurrying wing !

DAVID.

I came a conqueror home, but am as one  
Robbed of all might and valiance of the will,

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This rumour in mine ears. O Saul, Saul, Saul,  
Belovèd, would that on thy weary breast  
I had laid down my face and died with thee !  
Sweet as a father's kiss was thine, my King ;  
Tender thy hands around my bended neck,  
Stooped low in awe of thee. O wintry head  
Whitened with sorrow ! O great eyes of blue,  
That under stern and awful brows were soft  
And tremulous as women's in their love !  
O shoulders stubborn as the cliffs, and arms  
Thick-corded as the pinetree-roots ! O might  
And beauty above all beauty and might of men,  
Would I had died when ye died ! would my flesh  
The birds had torn when you the flocks devoured !

ISRAELITES.

Behold our pain grows fiercer, seeing thine,  
And tenfold sorrow coils around our breasts.

DAVID.

Jonathan, dost thou hear me from thy deeps,  
Crying for thee ? I stretch my lonely arms,



Dark-groping for thy neck, and the thin air  
Opens for me, and the utter silence mocks.  
My brother, thou wert in thy lowliness  
Than ever utmost conqueror more august,  
Content with little empire where to rule  
Were less than amplest good. The rough world  
    brake  
Thy dove's-heart ere the numbering of thy days.

ISRAELITES.

How long wilt thou weep with us, making bitterer  
The burthen of our woe?

DAVID.

    O Israel,  
The spear that laid thee low hath well-nigh severed  
My soul and body ! Ever, as some poor bird  
Chased by the ravenous enemy, thou fliest  
Down and athwart the winds, and imminent hurt  
Pursueth. Shall there come no wrathful hand  
To smite the oppressor, and no will to lead  
Thy days with love, nor ever in any breast

Shalt thou find shelter? . . Better my rent limbs  
Lay loathed upon the mountain, than mine eyes  
Had looked upon thy shame, O Israel!

ISRAELITES.

See how the torment of his grief hath swept  
The young life from his lips, and paled with age,  
Even at a breath, the glory of his eyes.

DAVID.

O that the Father would unfold  
From deeps of night and clouds of death,  
For but one hour, His hidden cause  
And reason why, from days of old  
Unto the latest hour, His laws  
Lead man from pain to pain,  
Who ever weary journeyeth,  
With hope that ever fails and flows,  
To find no thing he seeks, nor gain  
The harvest of the seed he sows !  
My soul is sick with visions, heaved  
From utmost years and vain to-day,

Of splendours faded, faiths deceived,  
And youth and beauty gnawn away.  
There is no ill the eyes behold  
Like beauty's ruin, strength's decay,  
The tombs that silent lips enfold,  
The golden cities gone to clay.  
I have seen young loves like vine-shoots tall  
Put forth their clambering sprays, and fall  
Sun-stricken in the angry noon ;  
I have beheld the dying rise,  
And open lips and widening eyes  
For eager speech, and sudden swoon  
Away, to vanish in the grave ;  
I have seen the wounded eagle wave  
Wide wings to scale the shoreless air,  
Then droop in piteous mute despair ;  
I have stood amid the wasted halls  
Of cities whelmed in streams of fire  
In the summer of mirth and festivals,  
And trod the wreck of empires strewn  
About the barren drifting sands,  
To cry to Him in wild desire

For one faint beam of light to read  
The mystery of the lands,  
Why love is crownless, fruitless life,  
And vain the labour of the hands.  
And O Saul, Saul, for thy long agony,  
And for thy passionate strife,  
What end? and for the wounds of thy great soul  
What help or healing, over what void sea  
Or through what desert ways lone wandering to  
what goal?

## ISRAELITES.

Surely our sorrows multiply with days.

## DAVID.

Yet, O my friends, let us have faith in Him  
Who draweth loftiest good from loathliest ill ;  
For though in shadow darker than the clouds  
He moveth, and the end may none declare,  
Yet know we well that never wise man toils  
Purposeless, never good man plots for pain :  
And so, in ways of gloom, the all-wise good God.

JOAB.

O David, O our lord, with thee our trust  
Abideth, and our hope of Israel's sway,  
Large empire, and the swallowing up of lands.

ABISHAI.

For thine the sovran will, the seeing eye,  
Courage, and temperate brain, and glad sweet  
strength.

ASAHIEL.

And all men's souls are captive of thine eyes.

AHINOAM.

Tender thy hands, and delicate thy love,  
Far-searching to the inmost realms of pain.

ABIGAIL.

Not by the sinewy hand alone, O lord,  
Shall men be ruled, but by the skilled fair mind,  
Whose thoughts are as ten thousand armed foes,  
Whose words are keener than the shaft or spear ;

VOICES *afar*.

The darkness of death hath shadow  
Black night, and the grave.

MESSENGER.

O King, I know not with what words to tell  
Truth that is all one horror. Never yet  
Hath evil with so many hands assailed  
Israel, or in an hour so weak. For he  
Who was thy friend and firm prop of thy throne  
David, whom thou dost ever, in vain, pursue  
Arms; and a crowd, not worst of all thy hosts  
Girds him; and one by one thy noblest men  
Drop off, and stray away; and while thy realm  
Breaks open in the midst, and falls a-twain,  
Hosts gather on thy borders, west and south;  
The Philistine, a wave storm-blown and fierce;  
And Amalek, new-risen, fierce and firm;  
While now a rumour fraught with tenfold woe  
Runneth from ear to ear about the land,  
Vague, strange, but darkening all men with its woe.

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And thine the mind with passion-corded limbs,  
Thy will rolls steadfast as the whelming sea.

ABIATHAR.

And faith in God he giveth for thy blessing,  
The goodliest dower of men.

GAD.

Trust not thyself,  
Nor sever human power from power divine ;  
With thine own body veil not God from men ;  
Rule to reveal in little His great light :  
So shalt thou lead thy people in thy love,  
Beyond all longing, thou the King supreme,  
Nor yield thy sceptre to a happier hand.

ISRAELITES.

Thou art more to us than light, or wine, or the  
water-deep,  
Than dawn that dazzleth in the east, than the night,  
or sleep,  
For hope, or soul's refreshing, or strength, or rests,

O lord to whom we bow, O solace of our breasts !  
For on thy heart our God hath scattered of all his  
store,

Gifts measureless above thy fellows, and doth pour  
His valour around thy feet, his beauty around thy  
brow ;

And we thy friends, thy servants, that before thee  
bow

Know He is nigh, beholding in thy countenance  
Love, and sweet joy in living, and in thy steadfast  
glance

Firm majesty that fears not man, and tranquil might  
What awes the heart of evil ; justice, truth, and right.  
God's likeness, drawing us to God through love of  
thee !

And who but thee, O David, O valorous chief, but  
thee

Shall Israel look to in her heaviest hour, or claim  
Guide or protector ? Thou shalt lift her perishing  
name

Above all peoples, stretching far thy victor sword  
Over wide lands with wrath, and thunder of thy  
word.



## DAVID.

O here, where late our little city stood,  
And now this desolation darkens us,  
Friends, with a rapid hand and heart renewed,  
Building, once more uprear we roof and tower,  
And make ourselves a realm. For, O my mates  
Well-tried in many a valiant fight and fair,  
And ye, my loved and gentle, days of dole  
Have ours been, many a month of weariness,  
In desert and on mountain and in cave—  
Mine not the least, love, friendship, fair command  
Rent from me, young ambition seared at heart,  
And hope long vanquished, through ways waterless,  
Beastlike, far-driven by the wild fierce King ;  
And, after, battling with the desert brood,  
Yielding to alien kings and alien sway  
Irk some obedience, with compelled craft,  
Dissimulation dulling honour's eye,  
Brute-cunning, griefs mine own, griefs triple-barbed  
Through sympathy the sorest of all woe—  
But God for ever, though in darkness, nigh,  
Impelling or restraining ; till but now,

Though ye were angered with me for an ill,  
Not mine, though mine the heavier loss and pain,  
Behold the plunderer spoiled, and all ye loved  
Restored, and ninefold glory on our brows !  
And now should come the wreath and crown of war,  
Fair civic splendour, and the reign of rest,  
Thought's empire, and the thirst of lore alone,  
And wisdom's mute magnificent decrees ;  
Sweet days restorative, a time for dreams  
And deeds of rare divine artificers,  
The feats of art outvying feats of arms.  
For he that lives for war mistakes war's end,  
Which is peace permanent, long space for love,  
And interchange of intellectual spoil  
Ta'en with no traitor sword ; gaunt ignorance  
O'erthrown, with all its monstrous rout of lies  
And rabble of fool fears ; the market-place  
Thronged ; and the highways swept of bandit  
          swarms,  
For coming and going of all foreign feet ;  
And every mountain terraced to its tops,  
For fig, or vine, or olive, corn, or flax ;

And the green valleys laughing in the sun ;  
Divine creative travail, harmony  
Of toiling hand and purpose of the heart  
With His who schemed ; man's function at his best,  
No higher—not to mar this wondrous woof,  
But be as gods doing the deeds of God—  
To coax the timorous blossom, twine the bough,  
And drive sweet sustenance through Earth's dry  
veins,

Lending hurt Nature room to right herself,  
And spread the splendour of her glorious limbs.  
Nor higher, friends, for us this hour than take  
What privilege He yields, and, victor-like,  
Here while we may, and if indeed we may,  
Plant well the fair foundations of fair deeds  
And bloodless empire ; modelling a realm  
In little ; trustful, training heart and eye  
For lordlier labour, till the womb of time,  
All-wonderful, unfolds a vaster birth.

END OF PART I. OF THE TRAGEDY OF ISRAEL.

# UGONE: A TRAGEDY.

BY GEORGE F. ARMSTRONG, M.A.

*A New Edition.* LONGMANS & Co. Price 6s.

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*From the "SPECTATOR."*

"The main subject of the drama is the struggle of the hero's soul between love and revenge. He loves a fair English girl, and this love is leading him to peace; but he has the sense of great

wrongs brooding in his heart, wrongs done to his house in past time by enemies who still live and flourish, wrongs daily suffered by himself from the society which spurns him in his fallen fortunes. As the scales are trembling in suspense, there come new and unpardonable injuries to turn the balance against the better cause, and the play, which is of a very sombre hue, ends in crime and disgrace. . . . There is dramatic power in *Ugène*. . . . Though the drawing of the hero's character does not make a very favourable impression on our judgment, the minor personages—*Marina*, for instance, a thorough Italian woman—are well conceived. We like Mr. ARMSTRONG best in his descriptions of scenery. . . . But the whole is carefully written, in language well chosen, with metre that seldom fails in melody."

*From the "WESTMINSTER REVIEW."*

"*Ugène* will, we are afraid, not meet with so many readers as it deserves. . . . Certainly a reading drama does not hit the taste of the day, even when written by the most popular authors. . . . *Ugène* deserves to be an exception. . . . Great powers of description."

*From the "STANDARD."*

"[He] has both power and passion, as well as originality; and though the present age has more sympathy with burlesque than tragedy, readers will be attracted by the vigour and boldness of the story here told them. A modern tragedy, with the scene cast in Italy, is in itself alone a sufficient claim to notice. . . . The work of an educated mind . . . real poetic taste and feeling."

*From "PUBLIC OPINION."*

"This is a five-act tragedy by a young writer already favourably recognized among the rising generation of poets. Among these, judging from the present as well as earlier performances, Mr. ARMSTRONG will, in all probability, take a marked place. He can conceive a subject as a whole, and not merely as a congeries of fragments, which is more than some poets, even of no inconsiderable repute, can achieve. His language, too, is terse and forcible; his descriptions of scenery vivid and picturesque, and his personages . . . are instinct with life."

*From the "ORCHESTRA."*

"After pale, colourless imitations of Tennyson, and the mock materialisms which follow in the track of Swinburne, it is refreshing to come upon the evidence of original power in a poet. Mr. ARMSTRONG may claim that honourable designation without impeachment. He is not moulded, and is only slightly coloured, by the new schools. In his verse there are no purloined conceits, no

runnings in grooves, no echoes from a richer muse. . . . His verse is melodious, and rich, and attractive. This is no slight praise, to say the workmanship is good, and yet recalls no recognized master. Very few writers of the day could take up Mr. ARMSTRONG's subject and make it tolerable. . . . A tragedy in blank verse, and numbering two hundred and fifty pages! Respect for Mr. ARMSTRONG quickens into interest. The poet has a quick eye for character, and an artist's faculty for reproducing it. The personages of the drama assume an individuality, and preserve it. It is not that the author labels them or insists on their attributes, but that their own speech bewrayeth them. This is true dramatic art. . . . If his work is over elaborate, the elaborations are good; if his arena is crowded with personages, these personages have each his own life and character. . . . The murder is artistically represented off the stage, as it were. . . . The subsequent scenes of contrition and horror are full of force. . . . There are several sub-histories which march side by side with the principal story; but these are too complicated to relate. . . . We have quoted one speech for its vigour and imagery. Let another extract be a sample of delicate landscape-painting, such as occurs now and then to soften the pressure of action and the tumult of rival interests. . . . This is a perfect picture of north Italian scenery, painted with the hand of a master. But *Ugone* was written in Italy, and the passion and music of its pages have a savour of the land."

From the "EDINBURGH COURANT."

"We have looked forward to this volume with more than ordinary interest. Mr. ARMSTRONG's first volume attracted a considerable amount of attention, and was acknowledged by competent critics to show more real power and true poetic insight than any first effort had done for some time. The genius of which his lamented brother Edmund had given proof before his too early death, no doubt enlisted for the *Poems* warm sympathy; but we had only to dip into *Coragene's Temptation*, and some of the exquisitely beautiful minor pieces, to recognize that the poet's mantle had fallen upon both the brothers. . . . The power, passion, force, and pathos of *Ugone* are so great, that we do not require to ask our readers' forbearance while we take them rapidly through some of the principal scenes in it, and give them extracts from a drama which they ought to read, and, reading, will learn to love. . . . Richness of thought, force of utterance, power of description, are the characteristics of Mr. ARMSTRONG's genius. . . . His verse is copious, free, unrestrained, passionate, vigorous; now pathetic, now tender; always musical and beautiful. . . . We are afraid we have not been able to convey to our readers an adequate idea of the drama. The canvas is so crowded, the scenes change so quickly, the lights and

shadows come and go so fast, that it is not easy to give a good account of it without seemingly destroying the artistic roundness of the picture as a whole. We hope to hear soon of Mr. ARMSTRONG again."

From the "BIRMINGHAM GAZETTE."

"We have received *Ugone: a Tragedy*, from the pen of GEORGE FRANCIS ARMSTRONG, brother of the late Mr. E. J. ARMSTRONG, whose poems attracted such favourable criticism some four or five years ago. Poetical talent appears abundant in this family. This present writer has published a volume of miscellaneous poems of great merit, and he now presents to the world a tragedy original in its conception, scholarly in its execution, and stately and elegant in its style. We leave to abler critics the analysis of this long story, which is, we learn, for the most part based on fact. Its scene is laid in Milan. . . Individuals of all nationalities figure among its *dramatis personæ*, and there is abundance of scope for the display of character, scope of which the author fully avails himself."

From the "DARK BLUE MAGAZINE."

"The gifted author of *Ugone* tells us in his 'apology' that the main portion of this drama is based on fact, and further, that the characters are sketches from life. This statement finds an echo in almost every scene of the poem, for it is no exaggeration to say that nowhere in this drama do we meet with that unnaturalness and utter improbability of incident which mars so much the development of plot in so many of our recent dramas; and that everywhere we find the *dramatis personæ* not merely speaking a language most consistent with their characters as presented by the poet, but acting in a manner consistent with the natural conditions of the circumstances in which they are placed. The terrible tale of this tragedy may be told in a very few words. . . From the merits of the poems before us, we are induced to place a high value on the poetical abilities of the author; almost every scene of it thrills us with terror or melts us with pity. Power is the special characteristic of Mr. ARMSTRONG's poetry. . ."

". . . The powerful current of his poetry is not the majestic might of the calm, broad, deep river which flows on, reflecting in its placid bosom the overhanging beauty of the heavens, and the surrounding brightness of the earth; but it is the unrestrained and impetuous strength of the mountain torrent-stream, overflowing its banks, and sweeping away in its resistless deluge every object that it meets. . . It bears the undoubted impress of genius, as none will doubt who feel the pulse of poetry in their blood. The love scenes between *Adelaide* and *Ugone* are pervaded with the highest and purest inspirations of passion; and the last scene, where *Adelaide* dies in the arms of her lover, reaches the height of intense

tragedy, and reveals a degree of power on the part of the poet rarely equalled by the most popular poets of the day, even in their best passages."

*From the "DUBLIN EVENING MAIL."*

"It is with no small pleasure that we now hail Mr. ARMSTRONG's second appearance in print. The drama before us gives evidence of a mental advance, quite wonderful in so short a time. We heartily congratulate Mr. ARMSTRONG on his year's work. . . . The plot has the merit of originality, and is remarkably well worked out, the action steadily advancing, and the interest deepening from first to last. . . . The whole drama is a bold, and in a great measure, successful attempt to idealize some aspects of modern life. The dialogue is happily managed throughout, the author giving us good sonorous dramatic blank verse, and, what is perhaps even less common, good dramatic prose. . . . [We] come to Scene VI. of the Fourth Act. This we think the greatest scene in the drama; in it the whole horror of the tragedy culminates. . . . The whole scene is full of weird gloom and stormy passion. . . . We wish him [Mr. ARMSTRONG] a hearty godspeed in the career which he has chosen, and we shall watch this career with sympathy and interest."

*From the "DAILY EXPRESS" (Dublin).*

"Mr. ARMSTRONG has already gained for himself a name by his volume of poems, published last year. . . . The scene [of *Ugone*] is laid in Italy, and the southern warmth and richness of colouring that pervade the whole, give it a singular attractiveness. In portraying character, Mr. ARMSTRONG is peculiarly happy. A large number, perhaps too large a number, of *dramatis personæ* are introduced, and yet none are mere sketches. They are portraits which stand out boldly in strong relief, and are as far from anything of indefiniteness as they are from being caricatures. The hero, *Ugone Bardi*, is a thorough Italian, strong and fiery in his passion, whether of love or hate. . . . Perhaps the finest and most original conception of character in the work is that of *Francesco*, the artist brother of *Ugone*. . . . The female characters are well conceived and worked out. . . . The earnestness and purity of tone throughout the work are especially worthy of praise. Appealing, as it does, to the intellectual, and not to the animal, part of our nature, this tragedy of Mr. ARMSTRONG's is a strong protest against a class of writing that has gained but too large a show of popular favour."

*From the "FREEMAN'S JOURNAL" (Dublin).*

"The plot is skilful. . . . He has very considerable command of language . . . his thought is not common-place . . . his images



are suggestive and unconstrained . . . his lines are accurately measured, and his sentences are neatly balanced . . . there is not a bit of bad sense in the whole 250 pages; and this itself is uncommon in a young poet. . . . Good taste . . . sound sense . . . an energetic capacity."

From "SAUNDERS' NEWS-LETTER" (*Dublin*).

"The ability manifested in the earlier published poems of this gentleman has progressed to a fulness in the tragedy of *Ugoue*. . . That *Ugoue* has some blemishes . . . cannot be disputed; but these are few in comparison with its beauties of diction and truth of characterization. Then it has the genuine ring of poetry, not bejewelled with over-adornment of imagery, but replete with sentiment charmingly expressed, and suitable to the situations and feelings of the actors. . . . It is curious, and pleasantly curious, to find dramatic and poetic instinct so indicative of genius throughout this tragedy. It is felt as an odour in lines of exquisite fitness; it rises to grandeur of utterance in the expression of noble and appropriate sentiments, and leaves upon the mind of the reader the grasp of a genuine poet. . . . We cannot but congratulate Mr. ARMSTRONG on the production of a genuinely artistic work, and we hope further to hear of him. . . . We must think [him] a very young man, and, therefore, we have large hope in his future productions."

## POEMS BY GEORGE F. ARMSTRONG, M.A.

### SAINTE BEUVE.

(From a Letter of the 26th January, 1869.)

"Un poète d'une sensibilité vive et grave, presque austère, et avec des accents de tendresse. . . . Ce poème lyrique qui s'appelle *Un Dechirement d'Amitié* a remué en moi bien des fibres. Que de pensées! que de nuances! que de vers saisissants par le naturel, poétiques à la fois par l'image et par la vérité des détails!—

'The shadow crossing o'er the gravel-walk  
Will draw thee to thy window' . . .

Et de beaux vers simples qui s'élancent:—

'Thou wilt not gladden with the dawn of Spring!—'

. . . des accents qui font tressaillir jusqu'à la vieillesse, et qui lui arrachent des soupirs."

From the "REVUE DES DEUX MONDES."

"Son livre le fait connaître pour un esprit sincère, profondément religieux, mais n'accordant sa confiance à aucune des églises ou des sectes de son pays, pour un cœur aimant qui s'épanchait dans des vers plutôt tendres que passionnés."

From the "LEADER," January 30, 1869.

"His blank verse is made subtle and suggestive by the flow of a rich and copious rhetoric, though repressed with considerable artistic power, and moulded after a fashion which never suffers its implications or its direct meanings to grow vague or involved. . . He spiritualizes his aspirations with pure and exalted thoughts. His direct appeals to the Almighty, his musings on Christ, are all noble. Even the occasional references to his slight and reasonable scepticism are rendered fascinating by their melodious utterance, and beautiful by their rich inlay of wise, poetic doubt. The second poem in the book, called *Sundered Friendship*, is full of exalted pathos. The tenderness that vibrates throughout the whole length of the verses appeals with an irresistible power at its close. Mr. ARMSTRONG has learnt the secret of making his pathos unerring, by colouring it with the eloquence of a highly-wrought belief in the mercy and love of the great Father of all. The hush of a deep religious feeling renders solemn the closing stanzas of this poem. . . . It falls very sweetly after the passionate outbursts that sometimes swell the lines into positive sublimity. . . . *Coragene's Temptation* is a truly forcible dramatic fragment—remarkable for its sustained vigour of treatment. . . . Its merit lies in the subtlety with which the various passions, inspired by a love that would not and yet would, are developed—the abruptness of their transition necessitating a careful discrimination to prevent the separating periods being too marked, and the emotions consequently rendered abnormal by glaring contrast. . . . Quotations from such a poem as this, whose merit is its artistic entirety, embracing the lights and shadows of frequent and varied impulses of passion, can convey but a poor notion of the cause of our admiration to the reader. . . . But to our minds the sweetest and most original poem in the collection is that entitled *In the Dance*. Anything more airy and delightful, anything more tragic in its abrupt finish than this composition, cannot be imagined. It is one poem, however, of many that are more or less piquant, dramatic, or subtle. . . . To all lovers of poetry we commend Mr. ARMSTRONG's volume as one of the choicest contributions to the poetical literature of the period the last half-dozen years have seen."

From the "ATHENÆUM."

"[He] has great command of language and a faculty for writing in verse with firmness and force of utterance. . . . *Coragene's Temptation* is the best thing in the book. . . . It is argued out as Mr. Browning argues for his characters. A Saint, living in a wilderness, is in love with a beautiful and innocent girl. His strugglings against earthly passion, his belief in the mortal sin he

is committing, and the subtlety with which the temptation glides into his heart and brain; the mixture of love and the base fear of injuring his own soul; the gentle, worshipping love of the girl; are very forcibly and well described. . . A power of understanding and sympathizing with the contradictions and moods of thought in a human soul at war with itself."

*From the "SPECTATOR."*

"The writer has a style of his own. It displays, indeed, the fervent audacious rhetoric which distinguishes our youngest school of poets, but it has a sufficiently marked individuality. . . Repose is a quality which it would probably disdain. Will the writer, whom we judge to be a very young man, excuse us if we advise him to mingle a little more thought with his passion? We like *Through the Solitudes* as well as any of the poems. It begins with some vigorous lines . . . and the horror of solitude and death which comes upon the traveller when he reaches the lonely moor is described with no little power."

*From the "LONDON REVIEW"*

"A bold and nimble fancy; affluence of language; a ready supply of images. . . . The cast of his mind is essentially lyrical, and his poems consequently belong to the lyrical order. They have the characteristics of warmth and movement—lacking, almost as a necessity, repose. Perhaps the speciality of the book is a certain independence of view and tone, which gives much zest to some of the pieces."

*From the "DAILY TELEGRAPH."*

"Three or four years ago died Edmund J. Armstrong, whose poems have since been edited by his brother, Mr. GEORGE FRANCIS ARMSTRONG. The latter now publishes a volume of verse of his own, simply entitled '*Poems*,' which is likely to attract attention. . . . We shall not be surprised if this little volume causes a considerable fuss. . . . It is certainly well deserving of examination."

*From the "QUEEN, THE LADY'S NEWSPAPER AND COURT CHRONICLE."*

"His brother Edmund lived only long enough to reveal his poetic genius to the world. Happily there is still in the family a genuine singer, and one whose utterances cannot fail to please. The versatility of his talent appears in the varieties of composition and subject which he has chosen and handled so well. At one time an airy quaintness distinguishes his manner; at another his march is measured and solemn; sometimes it is the playfulness of the child, and sometimes the sternness of the warrior. Here he deals with worldly themes, and anon he treats of high

matters of religion. Sometimes he rhymes in elegant lyrics, and sometimes writes dramatically and in blank verse. There is a certain boldness and originality in his conceptions, and an aptness in his similes which is remarkable. Take as an example—

‘Ay, Time will draw thee from me, as the sea  
Draws weed or shell flung up from glutted graves  
To the starved sand, and runs in mockery  
Back, laughing in the hollows of his waves.’

. . . The felicitous use of his epithets is one of his peculiar excellencies. . . We have found so much good in this volume that we will not even allude to incidental blemishes, which are indeed but few. It is encouraging to meet sometimes with poetry amid the forest of verse produced in our age. Let us repeat our assurance that there is poetry in this book, and we conclude by warmly recommending it.”

From the “*ABERDEEN JOURNAL*.”

“It is a pleasure to dip into a volume such as this now before us. The author—evidently a young man—has struck out of the old beaten paths, and in a measure at once original, melodious, and refined, gives us many poems which will bear to be read once and again—which is saying a good deal as poetry goes now-a-days. At one step the poet has taken his place among our true poets, and has gathered around him a rapt and listening audience. To give some idea of the volume, we make one or two extracts, advising our readers, however, to see the work for themselves. The opening poem entitled *Slain in the Forefront* [is] tender and touching, evidently referring to a brother of promise who died, . . . and whose writings, published some two or three years ago, were so favourably received by the press. In *Jesus Hominum Salvator* are verses that carry the reader along with them, and wake in the soul better and holier feelings. . . *The Christ* has the true ring of poesy in it. . . *Coragene's Temptation*, a finely-written poem in blank verse [is] the masterpiece in the volume. *Babble* has all the merry playfulness about it of the mountain rivulet addressed. . . . We take leave of Mr. ARMSTRONG, trusting, nay confident, that advancing years will more than fulfil the promise given in this his first literary venture.”

From the “*FIFESHIRE JOURNAL*.”

“This volume is one of great promise, by a gentleman gifted in no small degree with a vivid imagination, deep susceptibility, insight, and a sweet and easy power of expression. The brother of the author died when quite a young man, and just when his undoubted power as a poet came to be recognized by the critics; and touching traces of suffering for, and yearning after, a dead brother,

are visible in many pages of the present volume. The poems entitled *The Incense*, *Jesus Hominum Salvator*, *A Latter-Day Psalm*, and the *Miss Hylbert*, are full of spiritual depth of meaning, and could only have come from the pen of one who has pondered long on some of the greatest truths of our nature. Mr. ARMSTRONG'S longest and strongest poem is entitled *Coragene's Temptation*. The poem is passionate and powerful throughout. Some of the minor pieces have a delicious lyrical ring in them. In the *Ditty* our author is particularly happy, especially in the verses beginning 'O love, thou'rt like the dawn-wind that sighs across the sea,' 'O love thou'rt like the flowing of wine on fainting lips.' *Kisses* is a little gem in its way. The *Ecce-Song* has the gay sportiveness and playfulness, in its conception and form, which we feel when, by 'Glacier blue and snowy horn,' we seek in the echoing hills a response to our souls' joy and mirth. . . . These lines in *Babble*, too, strike us as having something of the music of the 'silvery rivulet' he is addressing. . . . There is a pretty conceit in *In the Studio*; and in *In the Dance* there is the whirl and excitement belonging to its subject, the end of it being particularly well managed. *A Demonstration* tells a great truth in a neat and effective, though outspoken way. . . . We conclude in our author's words, wondering, as we always do when lifted for a little above the world of sense and passion, from which we are ever endeavouring to escape—

'I marvel what the Father keeps from us  
Beyond the great wide sea, where the winds rove  
Lonely, and never ship hath sail'd.'

This [book] may be taken as a guarantee of the possession of real poetic power, which, we trust, will soon blaze out in some further proof of it."

*From the "EDINBURGH DAILY REVIEW."*

"This volume is fervid and youthful, and not without considerable power of expression. . . There is, indeed, a very high religious feeling and fervour in some of these poems. Take the following on the dead Christ. . . *Si sic omnia*, this glowing young writer would be (and may yet be) one of our poets."

*From the "DAILY EXPRESS" (Dublin).*

"It contains much that must win the suffrages of men of educated tastes and refined sympathies. . . The healthy love of the beautiful and good, the fondness of nature, the strivings after purity and truth, which run through so many of his poems, and the ease, elegance, and force of his versification. . . There are many bright glimpses of a noble faith, and nowhere a word of mockery, of despair, or of blind misbelief. . . Some of his ideas . . . are expressed with a power and beauty which rivet the attention, and find a place in the memory."

*From the "IRISH TIMES."*

"Mr. ARMSTRONG is brother to him whose poems are favourites at so many homesteads, and the brother's mantle seems to have fallen upon him. . . The larger pieces are very highly finished. Through all the soul of poetry lives and breathes. The volume will undoubtedly prove a success."

*From the "BELFAST NEWS-LETTER."*

"This volume is Mr. GEORGE ARMSTRONG's first venture, but the public will not suffer it to be his last. . . We have, safe within these narrow covers, a work of rare power—subtle music, pure and high morality, and such true originality as is more remarkable because an occasional rhythm does recall those of our contemporary poets. . . . No competent reader of the *Remonstrance*, or *En Voyage*, or *A Love's Loss*, or *Jesus Hominum Salvator*, will be ignorant that these are the strongly personal outcome of a new mind, finding its natural, easy expression in verse, and verse of that flowing, buoyant, flexible kind, which the thought wears as lightly and unconstrained as a perfectly-fitting robe is borne. We hold this in itself to be success, and the author's justification in putting what he has to tell us into metrical form, as one who is not a rhetorician in verse, but a genuine golden poet. And this poet, having thus made good his claim, insults neither virtue nor faith by any thought which his music vivifies. If Mr. ARMSTRONG seem once or twice to be too outspoken for conventionality, he strips vice only to scourge it. . . We promise the most fastidious reader that snow will not be stained by a single verse of this volume, though blackness may possibly be made aware that it is black. The reader will learn something new of the ways and words of love and hate, sorrow of bereavement, and hope of youth, and the power of poetry to trample and to celebrate, to scorn, to woo, and to adore."

*From the "OVERLAND MONTHLY" (San Francisco).*

"An author of whom America will yet hear a good account."

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## EDMUND J. ARMSTRONG'S POEMS.

*From the "TIMES," Nov. 18, 1865.*

"The opening meeting of the Session 1864-65 of the Undergraduate Philosophical Society was held last evening in the dining-hall of the Dublin University, Mr. Whiteside, M.P., in the chair . . . [The] President paid a warm tribute to the memory of his predecessor, Mr. Edmund John Armstrong, now

deceased, hoping that the spirit which animated him and lived in his poems might still guide and elevate members. Mr. Napier moved that the address be printed . . . He could not himself, without much emotion, listen to the affecting and beautiful tribute which the President had paid to the memory of his predecessor. He had had the privilege of moving a like resolution the previous year, when Edmund John Armstrong delivered that remarkable address to which the President alluded . . . And he trusted that that beautiful volume which, through the exertions of the Philosophical Society and of the Historical Society, had now been published, would adorn the literature of his country and tend to keep alive in their hearts the memory of one of model earnestness, of model sobriety, and of true genius. (Applause)."

"There is another gentleman, a member of this University, whose name should be maintained in eulogistic terms, and received with that profound respect which is due to his genius, his worth, and his virtues. I mean Edmund Armstrong. (Applause). He was a man of uncommon ability and undoubted talent, which gained for him the esteem, the respect, and the love of all who had the honour of knowing him. His brethren of the Historical Society have paid him the best tribute that could be paid to such an ornament of their College; they have contributed to publish his writings to the world . . . Who will not say that the poems of Edmund Armstrong are characterized by merit and excellence? Critics have acknowledged this . . . Though his life was short, yet his time was so spent and his abilities were so distinguished that he has entitled himself to the respect and gratitude of posterity. (Applause)." —SPEECH OF THE RIGHT HON. JAMES WHITESIDE, M.P., at the opening of the twenty-third Session of the Historical Society of Trinity College, Dublin.

*From the "STAR," Nov. 20, 1865.*

"At the opening of the Session of the Philosophical Society of Dublin University, the President pronounced a glowing panegyric on his lamented predecessor, Mr. Armstrong, whose early death has been a serious loss to literature. . . . The volume of Mr. ARMSTRONG'S poems, just published, amply justifies the eulogium pronounced on that occasion. The brief memoir of a life full of promise gives us glimpses of an original and powerful character, and of very curious phases of mental struggles and discipline. . . . The poems produce an impression of striking originality, true genius, and an earnest, candid, hard-working mind."

*From the "CONTEMPORARY REVIEW," March, 1866.*

"A volume of the compositions of Mr. EDMUND J. ARMSTRONG has been recently given to the world. His poems . . . are full of the evidences of elevated thought and keen sensibility, and

moreover exhibit a faculty of refined and forcible expression, and a feeling for poetic harmony, that breathe a prophecy (not here to be fulfilled) of maturer excellence. We believe our readers will thank us for quoting as a specimen the following description of the music of the Dead March in 'Saul' . . . With this mournful but elevating music in our ears, we pass to two other memorial notices."

*From the "PUBLIC OPINION."*

"This posthumous book should be prized as a memorial of the earnest labours of a singularly able thinker and writer."

*From the "ATHENÆUM."*

"Elegant and judicious poems."

*From the "PRESS."*

"Such very early flowering does not look safe; Keats was older when he began *Endymion*; Byron was only nineteen when he published his *Hours of Idleness*, but then they are dreadfully stupid. Such verse as Armstrong's at twenty too much resembles Bidder's calculations and Master Betty's acting . . . The two principal poems in the volume are *The Prisoner of Mount Saint Michael* and *Ovoca*. In both the fluent music of the blank-verse is marvellous for one so young . . . Some of the lyrical interludes in this poem [*Ovoca*] are very beautiful . . . The strongest poem which Mr. ARMSTRONG has written is entitled *By Gaslight*. It is too long to extract, and a few lines would give no idea of its power . . . In lieu thereof we quote a trifle which shows that the young poet had some humour."

*From the "DUBLIN EVENING MAIL."*

"Throughout we can recognize the true spirit of poetry and the impress of a vivid imagination. The principal piece contains beautiful and even thrilling passages . . . All are pervaded by the same vein of melancholy, here and there lightened by a steadfast faith in a higher power and another and a happier world."

*From the "COURT CIRCULAR."*

"There is an originality and a boldness about them which indicate that they are the work of one who, had he lived, would have occupied a high position . . . From the brief notice we have given of the man, it may be supposed that his writings oftentimes gave evidence of the views he so strongly held from time to time upon questions of a religious character. But this is so faint a colouring that it imbues the poetry with a mystic spirit which much enhances its value. ARMSTRONG was a true poet and forcible. His *Prisoner of Mount Saint Michael* is full of strong dramatic effect . . . Space will only permit us to make one other



quotation . . . . While it seems likewise to evidence the power of the author, it points to a faculty of expression which is very marked throughout the entire volume."

*From the "GUARDIAN."*

"The shorter poems . . . are of a varied character; some light and sportive, some intellectual exercises, some the agonies of a struggling soul, poured from the very depths of the writer's nature. A large number of extracts would be necessary, to give by specimen any fair notion of the collection. It will be better to recommend the whole to the attention of intelligent readers."

*From the "JOHN BULL."*

"MR. ARMSTRONG'S posthumous poems, the works of a talented young Irishman who was cut off in the infancy of success, exhibit in places considerable powers of writing. The *Prisoner of Mount Saint Michael*, with which the volume opens, is the passionate history of a Breton prisoner," &c. &c.

*From the "LONDON REVIEW."*

"There are some sweet and pretty things in his poetry, and a general tone of elegance."

*From the "ART JOURNAL."*

"The young poet's friends have done well in placing this wreath of *immortelles* on the tomb of the dead. It can scarcely fail to make known the name of ARMSTRONG far and wide."

*From the "ATLAS."*

"There are abundant traces of careful polishing and repolishing. His poems, as to their manner, are finely modulated and truly melodious. They are also serious and earnest. He abhorred all *persiflage*, and looked upon his powers and profession as a sacred trust . . . Few men at so early an age attain a style at once so well-balanced, pungent, and elegant; and the whole of his writings, whether poetical or prose, are inspired by a love of truth and a horror of wrong and wrong-doing, of a healthy and honest-hearted puritanical vehemence . . . In such works one must generally be content if signs of promise rather than of performance are discovered. In this case we can testify to something more. These [poems] are on their own merits a sensible and substantial addition to English poetic literature. We are, on grounds identified with the interests of the commonwealth of letters, indebted to the pious care which dictated the posthumous publication of these remains of a worthy writer and a worthy man."

*From the "DAILY EXPRESS" (Dublin).*

"During the few months in which this volume has been before the public it has steadily advanced in the opinion of men of the

finest culture and most educated taste. At first the great promise of its lamented author drew attention to the book; now it is the book which fully reveals the greatness of the author's promise. The story has become familiar to hundreds which records his college successes, his lingering illness, his long and successful struggle for spiritual enlightenment. But neither the interest of his noble life nor the sadness of his premature removal will explain the popularity which his posthumous poems have obtained . . . Inexhaustible command of brilliant language; boldness of metaphor, which was redeemed from extravagance by the vigilance of a fine taste; quick and lively sympathy with many and various feelings; an ear that was equally at home with the richest cadences of music and of verse; an eye that rested with a lover's fervour on the shifting colours and changing shapes of beauty, alike on the face of nature and in the depths of the human soul; and a lofty moral tone which never suffered the pure stream of meditation to be polluted—these are his claims to a place among the true poets of Great Britain."

*From the "CHRISTIAN EXAMINER" (Dublin).*

"The principal poem of the volume is *The Prisoner of Mount Saint Michael*. We accept it rather as a psychological poem than one which for its plot or subject can command entire sympathy, or be considered a complete success; but looking at it as an exposition of the workings of a human soul in all its deep, passionate thoughts—love, hate, anger, tenderness, despair, terror, and finally forgiveness, resignation, hope, and joy—it has high merit. Throughout there is a masterly appreciation of the heart of man—a fine analytical power of detecting and delineating the subtle influences that sway the soul from one feeling to another; and the progress of the mind through its various emotions, during the three days that precede the execution of the autobiographer, is wrought out with a power that proves the writer was a profound moralist and metaphysician. The poem abounds with fine passages, vigorous in thought, nervous in expression, and very finished in language and rhythm . . . It would be difficult to find anything more affecting in pathos, more highly wrought in its expression of intense grief, more exquisite in poetic feeling, than the verses in which Blanch bewails the death of her lover . . . The shorter pieces . . . are chiefly lyrics . . . Mr. ARMSTRONG's genius was eminently lyrical, and in this species of composition he has been very successful."

*From the "IRISH TIMES."*

"His poetry speaks to the hearts of all who read it. Tender, passionate, thoughtful, pious, these poems are destined to live, and to hold a very high place in the literature of the age."

*From the "FREEMAN'S JOURNAL" (Dublin).*

"ARMSTRONG'S poems are among the best specimens of youthful genius that have appeared in our times, and had he lived until his thought became more compact, and time brought his exuberant imagination more under the control of reflection, there could be little doubt of his position . . . The story of the *Prisoner's* last three days is worked out with remarkable power in monologue, which would be tedious were it not for the affluence of thought and subtle knowledge of the human heart which everywhere pervade it . . . The two chief poems are in blank verse, of which there are few finer specimens in modern poetry. The minor poems in almost every page invite selection. They abound in lyrical beauty . . . Nor was the young poet deficient in observation of character and humorous expression . . . Though a ripe scholar, there is not the slightest trace of pedantry in his poetry."

*From the "CONTEMPORARY REVIEW," February, 1867.*

"If we were to express the chief characteristic of Mr. ARMSTRONG'S mind in a single word, we should choose the word *ardour*. In this ardour we think may be discovered the source of his strength and of his weakness. By virtue of it he was enabled to lay hold of a subject so passionately that the details could seldom fail to be worked out with vigour and sureness of touch, and we have no doubt frequently with great—perhaps too great—rapidity. By virtue of it he was borne over the formal and technical difficulties of poetry. The mastery over versification is remarkable throughout the volume from first to last—especially remarkable in a writer so young; there is no feebleness, no flatness here; the verse is always energetic and full . . . Ardour, vigour of imagination, mastery over versification, considerable dramatic power, ability in representing and interpreting character; an earnest love of nature . . . These are what the reader will find in this volume . . . The arrangement of the shorter poems is much to be commended."

*From a LETTER of M. STE-BEUVE.*

"J'ai pris un douloureux plaisir à voir vivre devant moi cette jeune figure de poète si délicate, si distinguée, si précocement douée en toutes choses . . . Il aura sa place à part, ce me semble, dans ce groupe immortel et touchant des Kirke White, des Keats; et son jeune astre continuera de briller aux yeux de quiconque étudiera la Poésie anglaise, cette Poésie (autant que j'en puis juger) la plus riche de l'Europe moderne."

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the human brain, and the second part to a description of the results of the experiments.

2. The first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the human brain, and the second part to a description of the results of the experiments.

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